



# **Enthusiasm as a driving force in vocational education and training (VET) teachers' work**

**Defining positive organization and  
positive leadership in VET**

Sanna Wenström

SANNA WENSTRÖM

**Enthusiasm as a driving force in vocational education  
and training (VET) teachers' work. – Defining positive  
organization and positive leadership in VET**

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Teachers' enthusiasm, i.e. a positive and active work orientation, can improve the quality of teaching, and the performance and motivation of students in their studies. Enthusiasm also helps teachers themselves renew their practices and cope during times of change. Because of its positive effects, enthusiasm is also important for the success of the reform of vocational education and training (VET). However, there is little research on how teacher enthusiasm could be promoted in education organizations.

This study looked at the enthusiasm experienced by VET teachers in their work, according to the perceptions of teachers and immediate supervisors in education. The theoretical framework for this study was based on positive organizational research and the positive organization's PRIDE theory. The main objective of the study was to describe enthusiasm in the work of VET teachers and how work organizations and leadership enhance it. This was a qualitative multi-method study, and its three sub-studies consisted of an online questionnaire for teachers (N = 103, Sub-study I) and semi-structured interviews of teachers (N = 15, Sub-study II) and immediate supervisors (N = 15, Sub-study III). These were analysed in Sub-studies I and III using conventional and in Sub-study II using directed qualitative content analysis.

The results of the first sub-study showed that teachers' enthusiasm was manifested as a willingness to develop their work and their expertise, dedication to their work, and positive emotions and well-being at work. The teachers perceived their enthusiasm can be promoted by positive interaction in student work and in the work community. Enthusiasm was weakened in turn by the uncertainty arising from the changes in VET and the growing scarcity of resources. Sub-study II examined the factors that promoted enthusiasm at the organizational level, using the framework of the PRIDE theory. The results showed that enthusiasm can be strengthened by leadership and organizations that promote opportunities for the development of work and personal development, the employment of individual strengths, and interaction and collaboration. Sub-study III highlighted the views of the immediate supervisors in education on leadership that enables enthusiasm. According to the results of the study, leadership that enhances enthusiasm was manifested through nurturing good atmosphere, cherishing good relationships, providing encouraging feedback, and trusting in teachers' development of work and their expertise.

In an enthusiasm-promoting, positive organization and leadership, the key factors are the development of work and one's expertise, interaction, collaboration, and the employment of strengths. The study defines positive leadership as the interactive leadership of people, based on values and self-awareness, which is realized in both everyday actions and activity and as a humanistic view of people's strengths and potential. The results of the study draw attention to the factors that enable the leading of enthusiasm during changes in VET and thereby promote activities that are in accordance with the reform, renewal and collaboration, as well as the personnel's well-being and ability to change.

*Keywords: vocational education and training (VET), teachers, enthusiasm, positive leadership, positive organization, PRIDE theory*

Sanna Wenström

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Opettajan innostus eli myönteinen ja aktiivinen työorientaatio voi edistää opetuksen laatua, opiskelijoiden suoriutumista ja opiskelumotivaatiota. Lisäksi innostus auttaa opettajia itseään uudistumaan ja jaksamaan muutoksessa. Myönteisten vaikutustensa vuoksi innostus on tärkeä myös ammatillisen koulutuksen reformin onnistumisen kannalta. Tutkimusta siitä, miten opettajien innostusta voisi koulutusorganisaatioissa edistää, on kuitenkin vähän.

Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkasteltiin ammatillisen koulutuksen opettajien työssään kokamaa innostusta opettajien sekä opetuksen lähiesimiesten käsitysten mukaan. Tutkimuksen teoreettisen viitekehyksen muodostivat positiiviseen psykologiaan perustuvat positiivinen organisaatiotutkimus sekä positiivisen organisaation PRIDE-teoria. Tutkimuksen päätavoitteena oli kuvata, mitä innostuminen on ammatillisen koulutuksen opettajien työssä ja miten sitä vahvistavat toimintaorganisaatio sekä johtaminen. Kyseessä oli laadullinen monimenetelmäinen tutkimus, jonka kolme osatutkimusta koostuivat internet-kyselystä opettajille (N=103, osatutkimus I) sekä opettajien (N=15, osatutkimus II) ja lähiesimiesten (N=15, osatutkimus III) laadullisista teemahaastatteluista, jotka analysoitiin osatutkimuksissa I ja III aineistolähtöisellä ja osatutkimuksessa II teorialähtöisellä laadullisella sisällönanalyysillä.

Ensimmäisen osatutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat, että opettajien innostus ilmeni kehittämis- ja kehittymishalukkuutena, työhön panostamisena sekä myönteisinä tunteina ja hyvinvointina työssä. Opettajat kokivat innostustaan edistävänä opiskelijatyön sekä työyhteisön myönteisen vuorovaikutuksen. Innostusta puolestaan heikensivät ammatillisen koulutuksen muutokseen liittyvät epävarmuus ja resursien niukkeneminen. Osatutkimus II tarkasteli innostusta edistäviä tekijöitä organisaatiossa, positiivisen organisaation PRIDE-teorian viitekehyksessä. Tulokset osoittivat, että innostusta voivat vahvistaa sellainen johtaminen ja organisaatio, jotka edistävät kehittämisen ja kehittymisen mahdollisuuksia, yksilöllisten vahvuuksien hyödyntämistä sekä vuorovaikutusta ja yhteistyötä. Osatutkimus III toi esiin opetuksen lähiesimiesten näkemyksiä innostuksen mahdollistavasta johtamisesta. Tutkimustulosten mukaan innostusta edistävä johtaminen ilmeni myönteisen ilmapiirin innostamisena, hyvien ihmissuhteiden vaalimisena, kannustavan palautteeseen nojaamisena sekä opettajien kehittämiseen ja kehittymiseen luottamisena.

Innostusta edistävässä, positiivisessa organisaatiossa ja johtamisessa keskeisiä tekijöitä ovat kehittäminen ja kehittyminen, vuorovaikutus ja yhteistyö sekä vahvuuksien hyödyntäminen. Tutkimus määrittelee positiivisen johtamisen vuorovaikutteisena, arvoihin ja itsetuntemukseen perustuvana ihmisten johtamisena, joka toteutuu sekä arjen tekoina ja toimintana että humanistisena näkemyksenä ihmisten vahvuuksista ja potentiaalista. Tutkimustulokset kiinnittävät huomiota tekijöihin, joiden avulla ammatillisen koulutuksen muutoksessa on mahdollista johtaa innostusta ja sitä kautta edistää reformin mukaista toimintaa, uudistumista ja yhteistyötä sekä henkilöstön hyvinvointia ja muutoskyvykkyyttä.

*Avainsanat: ammatillinen koulutus, opettajat, innostus, positiivinen johtaminen, positiivinen organisaatio, PRIDE-teoria*

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Haukipudas, October 2019

**Sanna Wenström**

## List of Original Articles

This doctoral dissertation is based on the following original articles, which will be referred to in the text by their Roman numerals I – III

- I      Wenström, S., Uusiautti, S., & Määttä, K. (2018). “The force that keeps you going”. Enthusiasm in vocational education and training (VET) teachers’ work. *International Journal for Research in Vocational Education and Training*, 5(4), 244–263. <https://doi.org/10.13152/IJRVET.5.4.1>
- II     Wenström, S., Uusiautti, S., & Määttä, K. (2018). How does the PRIDE theory describe leadership and organization that enhances vocational education teachers’ (VET) enthusiasm? An analysis of enthusiastic Finnish VET-teachers’ perceptions. *European Journal of Workplace Innovation*, 4(1), 79–94. <http://journal.uia.no/index.php/EJWI/article/view/502>
- III    Wenström, S., Uusiautti, S., & Määttä, K. (2019). What kind of leadership promotes vocational education and training (VET) teachers’ enthusiasm at work? *International Journal of Research Studies in Psychology*, 8(1), 79–90. <https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrsp.2019.4005>

Articles I – III are reproduced with the kind permission of their original publishers.

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# 1 Introduction

The aim of vocational education and training (VET) is to develop the professional skills of the population to meet the needs of industry and commerce. Another aim is to help students become good, balanced and civilized people and members of society, and to provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills for participating in further study, professional development, free-time activities and the diverse development of their personality (Vocational Education and Training Act 531/2017, § 2). Because work is constantly changing, vocational education will also have to become more agile and working life oriented (see also Zhu & Engels, 2014). At the same time, it will have to more flexibly meet the individual needs of students and to provide personal paths for acquiring skills. As we cannot accurately predict the skills that will be needed in the future, it is important that students also acquire the ability to continuously develop their own skills and life-long learning (Kwakman, 2003; Lam, Cheng, & Choy, 2010; Powell, Bernhard, & Graf, 2012).

Because we believe that an enthusiastic worker with a positive and active attitude to their work wants to and has the energy to develop their own skills and their own work, it is also important that during their vocational education, students find inspiration and motivation in their own field (Bakker, 2017; Frenzel, Becker-Kurz, Pekrun, Goetz, & Lüdtke, 2018). Here, the enthusiasm of VET teachers plays a significant role. If the teachers themselves do not enjoy or value their work, or if they are not enthusiastic about teaching or the field they are teaching, we cannot expect students to be enthusiastic about it either (Keller, Goetz, Becker, Morger, & Hensley, 2014; Kunter & Holzberger, 2014).

In this study, enthusiasm is defined as a teacher's comprehensive, positive work orientation (Kunter & Holzberger, 2014). Studies have shown that teachers' enthusiasm is linked to the learning outcomes and motivation of students (Keller, Neumann, & Fisher, 2013; Moé, 2016), which are key objectives in vocational education. However, enthusiasm among VET teachers has been only scarcely studied<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, research has mainly used quantitative methods (Keller, Woolfolk Hoy, Goetz, & Frenzel, 2016), and existing indicators or predetermined variables still only measure things we have been able to observe or enquire about (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). Factors relevant to enthusiasm may exist outside these indicators (Klassen et al., 2012; Madden & Bailey,

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1 VET teachers have been part of the study populations of studies of enthusiasm and work engagement (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou 2007; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Kunter et al. 2008; Kunter, Frenzel, Nagy, Baumert, & Pekrun, 2011).

2017). We may be able to trace these factors using qualitative research, by asking the teachers themselves about this issue (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In order to meet the changing needs of working life and students, VET is undergoing the greatest reform of its history, the vocational education and training reform (from here on: Reform), according to which, from the beginning of 2018, degrees, legislation and funding will be overhauled (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). This means that teachers will have to change their ways of working, pedagogical thinking and master a great deal of new information (Vähäsantanen, 2015). As earlier research has shown that enthusiasm is linked to teachers' positive attitudes to change and their willingness to develop (Kunter & Holzberger, 2014; Lam et al., 2010), we can assume that enthusiastic teachers will also act as drivers of change in their work communities in the VET Reform. Moreover, teachers as well as any workers at any field, will need readiness for continuous change.

The requirement for agility and flexibility in VET also means that the change will be continuous. This Reform will not be the last change: As the whole working life is changing, the teachers' work is constantly changing, too. This means taking care of the resources and well-being of personnel, because educational reforms have shown to challenge to teachers' well-being (Day, 2002; Hargreaves, 2005). Studies have shown that positive emotions strengthen individual and communal resources and resilience, making facing and recovering from these changes easier (Fredrickson & Dutton, 2008; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). Thus, we can assume that enthusiasm and its related positive emotions are an important resource in the changing work of VET teachers. As enthusiasm has also shown to be associated with life satisfaction (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004), by promoting and enabling enthusiasm at work we can also foster a person's overall well-being.

There is also reason to assume that teachers' enthusiasm can promote the productivity, quality and efficiency in VET that the Reform requires. This is shown by previous studies of enthusiasm (e.g. Keller et al., 2016) and work engagement (e.g. Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015). It is therefore important to determine which factors affect the enthusiasm of teachers and how their enthusiasm could be promoted from the perspective of leadership and the organization (Keller et al., 2014; 2016). So far, research on both enthusiasm and work engagement has mainly focused on micro-level factors, and issues related to leadership and personnel practices have been studied less (Albrecht et al., 2015; Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011; Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes, & Delbridge, 2013).

The VET reform has created a need for research on leadership and immediate supervisors' work. Training providers have called for, for example, practices that promote well-being, progressive HR practices and *"understanding of change management, operating cultures and the means to influence the attitude climate"* (Kauma, 2017). However, leadership has been studied much less in VET than that at other levels of education (Coates et al., 2013; primary school e.g. Leithwood, Harris, &



Hopkins, 2008; Thoonen, Slegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geijssels, 2011; universities, e.g. Uusiautti, Syväjärvi, Stenvall, Perttula, & Määttä, 2012). Research on primary school principals cannot be directly applied to VET, the organizations of which are laxer and consist of several sub-systems (e.g. units and fields of education) and in which the educational background and work experience of teachers and supervisors varies (Beverborg, Slegers & van Veen, 2015). Immediate supervisors in education play a key role in the leadership and enabling of enthusiasm, as they are responsible for both day-to-day HR management and implementing activities that conform to the Reform in everyday life (Coates et al., 2013; Guest, 2014; Syväjärvi & Vakkala, 2012). Thus, it is important to determine what kind of views are behind the ways in which immediate supervision is carried out in practice in VET, and how the supervisors themselves feel they can influence teachers' enthusiasm (Coelli & Green, 2012).

Good HR management is particularly important during times of change (Syväjärvi & Vakkala, 2012), but it has proved to be the weakest element of VET leadership (Bloom, Lemos, Sadun, & van Reenen, 2015). Leadership practices also vary a great deal, even between the different units of the same training provider (Jokinen, Sieppi, & Maliranta, 2018). These findings mean that more detailed information is needed on day-to-day people leadership, its good practices and its challenges, as well as an understanding of leadership that enhances enthusiasm and of support of personnel well-being during change. It may be possible to find these through qualitative research based on the framework of positive organizational research, which aims to create flourishing and prosperous work communities (Fredrickson & Dutton, 2008). This goal is very topical in the VET Reform, which challenges teachers' well-being and enthusiasm, and at the same time creates new demands for teacher competence, innovativeness and collaboration, and though these for supervisory work.

The main objective of the study was to describe enthusiasm in the work of VET teachers and how work organization and leadership enhances it. The research questions and sub-questions are presented in Chapter 3.

The basis of this study is the idea of enthusiasm as a communal, energizing phenomenon, which through leadership can promote positive change in the organization (Bakker, 2017; Cameron & McNaughtan, 2014). The study also offers new perspectives for positive organizational research, which has hardly been conducted at all in educational institutions. This study applies a theory of positive organization called PRIDE (Cheung, 2014; 2015), which is in its infancy. PRIDE is acronym for elements of positive organization: Positive practices, Relationship enhancement, Individual attributes, Dynamic leadership and Emotional well-being (Cheung, 2015; see Chapter 2.2).

The study is also timely from the perspective of VET as it was conducted at the time of the active implementation of the VET Reform in 2016–2019. The study also seeks to bring perspectives to continuous change in teachers' work as well as in organizations generally.

## 2 Teachers' enthusiasm

### 2.1 Definition of the concept

The circumplex model of affect define enthusiasm as a positive affective state, connected to a high degree of arousal (Russell, 1980). In this model the experience of an affective state occurs as a result of a cognitive process, as distinct from the immediate emotional reaction at the beginning of an emotional process (Russell, 1980). As a positive affective state, enthusiasm is linked to positive psychology research, in which the focus is on positive phenomena and emotions (Seligman & Csíkszentmihályi, 2000). In the classification of character strengths in positive psychology, enthusiasm is also one form of character strength 'vitality' (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

In line with earlier research on the topic, this study defines teachers' enthusiasm as a relatively stable motivational orientation, which is associated with positive emotions and perceived meaningfulness (Kunter & Holzberger, 2014). The definition also employs a comprehensive model of teacher enthusiasm (Keller et al., 2016) and work engagement research, which defines enthusiasm as an element and manifestation of work engagement (Bakker, 2017).

#### 2.1.1 Enthusiasm in teaching work

Earlier studies have primarily examined teachers' enthusiasm as displayed enthusiasm, which is associated with, for example, non-verbal communication, humour, speech style and energetic movement (e.g. Collins, 1978; Bettencourt, Gillet, Gall, & Hull, 1983; Murray, 1983). Enthusiasm has also been examined as a teaching style that involves, for example, positive and encouraging interaction with students (e.g. Brophy & Good, 1986; Rosenshine, 1970). On the other hand, it has studied as a teacher's experienced enthusiasm, which refers to enjoyment that a teacher experiences either from the subject they are teaching or the teaching itself (Frenzel, Goetz, Lüdtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009; Kunter et al., 2008; 2011). It is estimated that a teacher who experiences enthusiasm also visibly expresses their enthusiasm to the student (Frenzel et al, 2009; Keller et al., 2016). A comprehensive model of teachers' enthusiasm has been proposed, which, combining the experience and expression of enthusiasm, defines enthusiasm as the "*Cojoined occurrence of positive affective experiences, that is, teaching-related enjoyment, and the behavioral expression of these experiences, that is (mostly nonverbal) behaviors of expressiveness*" (Keller et al., 2016, p. 751).

Earlier studies have shown that teachers' enthusiasm is related to students' learning, performance and motivation (Frenzel et al., 2018; Keller et al., 2013; Moé, 2016). A questionnaire, based on the assessments of teacher enthusiasm by mathematics teachers and their pupils, showed that enthusiastic teachers used teaching and guidance styles diversely, succeeded in managing classrooms and acknowledged the different needs of students (Kunter et al., 2008). A study of communications students in turn found that teacher enthusiasm strengthened their self-efficacy and commitment to their studies (Zhang, 2014). However, the results of the study are not entirely straightforward: in some experimental studies, the enthusiasm of the teacher even had a negative impact on learning outcomes, namely, by over-stimulating young pupils (Larkins & McKinney, 1982). If a teacher is overly enthusiastic, it can be difficult for students to share the feeling and become interested in the subject. Furthermore, the teacher's enthusiasm does not guarantee students' learning, and therefore, the key is to be able to use the enthusiasm as a positive resource in teachers' work—also when dealing with students who are not so interested in learning. It has also been found that the associations between enthusiasm and learning outcomes may also include potential moderators such as the age of the student (see Keller et al., 2016).

One potential mediator between teacher enthusiasm and student performance has shown to be the awakening of the student's attention and situational interest, which may later deepen into individual interest in learning and studying (Kim & Schallert, 2014; Renninger & Hidi, 2011). In VET, a teacher who expresses their own enthusiasm, interest and appreciation of the field of study is also an important role model for students in terms of working life (Keller, et al. 2014; 2016). Secondly, it has been found that enthusiasm conveys the teacher's positive emotions to the students (Frenzel et al., 2009; 2018; Keller et al., 2016). A teacher's positive emotions have in turn been found to be related to the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes (Duckworth, Quinn, & Seligman, 2009; Frenzel et al., 2009). It is estimated that an enthusiastic teacher creates a favourable, positive and inclusive atmosphere that strengthens students' motivation and learning (Frenzel et al., 2018; Keller et al., 2016). The positive emotions of the teacher and students also reciprocally affect each other, reinforcing the well-being of the whole group (Frenzel et al., 2018).

The generic term 'intrinsic orientations' has been used for teachers' enthusiasm, interest (Renninger & Hidi, 2011), passion, (Vallerand et al., 2003), flow (Csíkszentmihályi, 1990) and intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) to describe a relatively stable positive work orientation, which is also associated with non-classroom factors (Kunter & Holzberger, 2014). Thus, teachers' enthusiasm comes close to the concept and definition of work engagement: Work engagement means a wide-ranging, positive, work-related state that is not limited to any specific issue or event (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). A wide-ranging view

lends itself well to examining the enthusiasm of VET teachers: VET teachers do not only perform or lecture in the classroom; they are developers of their own vocational field in work communities, networks and working life, who coach their students to acquire skills for working life (Keller et al., 2016; Paaso, 2010; see also Kunter & Holzberger, 2014). For this reason, this study uses the concept of work engagement to define enthusiasm.

### **2.1.2 Enthusiasm as part of work engagement**

Enthusiasm is part of work engagement, its affective element and manifestation (Bakker, 2017). Categories of affective well-being (Warr, 1990), based in turn on a circumplex model of affect (Russell, 1980), have been used to illustrate the concept of work engagement. According to the model, work engagement and enthusiasm are illustrated by pleasure and high arousal (Barsade & Gibson, 2007). Enthusiasm is fundamentally connected to the different definitions of work engagement, presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Definition of work engagement*

<i>"Work engagement is a mental state in which a person performing a work activity is fully immersed in the activity, feeling full of energy and enthusiasm about the work."</i>	Bakker, 2017, p. 67
<i>"The term employee engagement refers to the individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work."</i>	Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002, p. 269
<i>"---engagement, which is defined as positive affective motivational fulfilment and includes aspect of enthusiasm."</i>	Kunter & Holzberger, 2014, p. 90
<i>"Engagement as a psychological state has variously embraced one or more of several related ideas, each in turn representing some form of absorption, attachment, and/or enthusiasm"</i>	Macey & Schneider, 2008, p. 6
<i>"We assume that employees are engaged when they perform effectively, go above and beyond the call of duty, and do so with energy and enthusiasm"</i>	Meyer, 2017, p. 89

One of the most commonly used definitions and operationalizations of work engagement is that of Schaufeli et al. (2002), according to which work engagement is a positive, work-related, fairly stable and holistic state of mind, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Vigor is manifested when a person is energetic and wants to invest effort in their work and is not discouraged by adversities (Hakanen et al., 2006). Dedication is related to the perceived meaningfulness of work, enthusiasm, and inspiration, and challenges are perceived as adequately demanding. Absorption means not noticing the passing of time while working (Hakanen et al., 2006). Work engagement has been studied among teachers, but not specifically in VET (Bakker et al., 2007; Bakker & Bal, 2010; Hakanen et al., 2006). Also a specific indicator has been developed to examine teachers' work

engagement, which takes into account the social dimension that is central to teachers' work: student interaction and relationships with colleagues (Klassen, Yerdelen, & Durksen, 2013).

Work engagement has been studied in terms of psychological state engagement, behavioural engagement and trait engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008). It is thought that the tendency to experience work engagement is related to certain personality traits, typically positive affectivity or proactivity (Young, Glerum, Wang, & Joseph, 2018; see also, Keller et al., 2014) and the resulting combined effect of personality traits and the work environment (Albrecht et al., 2015; Inceoglu & Warr, 2011; Macey & Schneider, 2008). The main point is that different fields of work have different demands and resources that affect how work engagement is experienced: on the one hand, work should offer enough challenges, and on the other hand, enough resources (Bakker, 2017). Teachers' resources that have been mentioned are support from supervisors and the work community, appreciation, opportunities for development, and a good work atmosphere (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Hakanen et al., 2006).

An enthusiastic employee, who is engaged in their work has a positive attitude towards reforms, takes the initiative and wants to do more than the bare minimum (Bakker, 2017; Macey & Schneider, 2008). Studies conducted in different fields have shown work engagement to be connected to the quality of customer service (Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005) and work performance (Demerouti, Bakker, & Gevers, 2015), and through this to the financial result of the organization (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009; see also Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010). Work engagement has also been found to promote employee health and well-being (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2018). Studies of teacher enthusiasm have made similar observations (Keller et al., 2016; Kunter et al., 2013).

Although the definitions of enthusiasm and work engagement are not straightforward, they share a positive and active work orientation, which manifests itself at the level of thought, emotion, motivation and behaviour (Keller et al., 2016; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Truss et al., 2013), as well as in social interaction in the work community and with students (Keller et al., 2016; Klassen et al., 2013). A comprehensive view of enthusiasm as a teacher's work orientation sees a teacher's work as emotion work conducted using one's own personality (Hargreaves, 2005), which is influenced by the teacher's personal qualities, student-work-related characteristics, and factors related to school organization, atmosphere and work community (Keller et al., 2016; Kunter & Holzberger, 2014; Macey & Schneider, 2008). Each teacher also expresses their enthusiasm in a personally characteristic way and intensity (Frenzel et al., 2009).

This study focuses on examining teachers' enthusiasm and the factors influencing it as described by teachers themselves and their immediate supervisors. It approaches enthusiasm in a qualitative and data-based way, without using the definitions or

indicators described above. For this reason, the study uses the concept of enthusiasm, which is an everyday concept related to the human world of experience (see the relationship between theoretical and operational concept, Eskola & Suoranta, 2014; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). It examines enthusiasm as part of teachers' work, work community and organization as part of the positive organizational research framework, based on positive psychology (Cameron, 2013).

## **2.2 An organization that strengthens enthusiasm**

One way in which to examine and structure the prerequisites of enthusiasm is the positive organization's PRIDE theory (Cheung, 2014, 2015; see also Määttä & Uusiautti, 2018), developed on the basis of a literature review and applied to the change and development process in social service organization (Cheung, 2014). The PRIDE theory's name is an acronym of the elements of a positive organization: Positive practices, Relationship enhancement, Individual attributes, Dynamic leadership, and Emotional well-being, at the centre of which are positive emotions. The theory suggests that the stronger the different sub-areas are, i.e. the higher the positive organizational index, the better results the organization is expected to achieve in terms of both employee well-being and organizational productivity, efficiency and quality (Cheung, 2014, 2015). Although the PRIDE theory was originally developed for quantitative measurements (positive organizational index, Cheung, 2014), this study uses it as a theoretical framework for qualitative research, which can be used to analyse factors that enable enthusiasm. The aim is, through qualitative research, to also expand on this new and still rarely applied theory (Ince, Jelley, & McKinnon, 2016).

Next, I examine the elements of the positive organization in accordance with the PRIDE theory. I also review previous research related to the effects of leadership and organization on enthusiasm and other positive phenomena in the organization.

### **2.2.1 Positive practices**

Positive practices are methods, practices or resources that emerge on the daily work, strategy, leadership or organizational level, and which are exceptional in a positive way and promote positive actions and well-being, help work performance, and foster the learning and professional growth of individuals, teams and the whole organization (Cameron, Mora, Leutscher, & Calarco, 2011; Cheung, 2014). Positive practices can promote other elements of the PRIDE theory, such as interaction relationships, positive emotions and atmosphere, the employment of strengths, and opportunities for developing work and expertise.

It has been suggested that positive practices exert influence through three different mechanisms (Cameron et al., 2011). The amplifying effect means that



positive practices result in positive emotions and actions, and thus strengthen the organization's social capital, communal resources (Cameron, Bright, & Caza, 2004; Cameron et al., 2011) and positive work atmosphere (Härtel & Ashkanasy, 2010). The buffering effect is based on the protective effect of positive practices and positive emotions against negative events, stress and adversities (Cameron et al., 2004). The heliotropic effect means, that positive practices foster positive energy among personnel, which may elevate performance (Cameron, 2012; Cameron et al., 2011).

Examples of positive practices are open communication and flow of information, clear organization of work and responsibilities, common objectives, the enabling of teamwork and opportunities for skills development or mentoring (Albrecht et al., 2015; Cheung, 2014). According to a previous study, practices that create opportunities for work development are important for enthusiasm (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Harter & Blacksmith, 2013). Practices that support autonomy are also important in teachers' work (e.g. Bakker & Bal, 2010; 2010; Lam et al., 2010), as they promote learning and well-being (Richardson & West, 2013; Stairs & Galpin, 2013). Positive practices can also promote collaboration and interaction in the organization's internal and external networks (Gittell, 2012). An example of this is teamwork, which also helps develop personal strengths and promotes optimal well-being, innovativeness and creativity, and the competitiveness of the educational organization during change (Richardson & West, 2013).

### **2.2.2 Relationship enhancement**

Positive relationships and interaction are key features of a positive organization (Mroz & Quinn, 2013). Understanding the different viewpoints of the people, collegial support and empathy can promote the construction of a good work atmosphere (Cheung, 2014; Richardson & West, 2013). According to a study by Cameron et al. (2011) on interaction practices, the effectiveness, financial performance and atmosphere of organizations, as well as customer satisfaction, were especially associated with caring, compassion, forgiveness, shared enthusiasm and appreciation of others.

Collaboration that surpasses roles and responsibilities within the organization promotes interaction (Gittell, 2012). Under the Reform, VET is based on collaboration and joint actions within the educational institute, in multidisciplinary networks and in working life (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). Positive interaction promotes well-being at work, efficiency, productivity, commitment, and communal learning (Gittell, 2012). Teacher collaboration has also been associated with students' performance during their studies (Reeves, Pun, & Chung, 2017; see also Jäppinen, 2010).

Good relationships at work support well-being and motivation and promote personal and professional growth (Colbert, Bono, & Purvanova, 2016; Stephens, Heaphy, & Dutton, 2012). Through confidential interactions, teachers can handle

both daily stress factors – for example, difficult student situations – and uncertainty related to change (Boldrini, Sappa, & Aprea, 2019). The significance of interaction and collegial support is highlighted during changes such as the VET Reform, which require discussion to, for example, analyse the basic task and process one's own professional identity (Vähäsantanen, 2015; Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2011). Support from the work community has also shown to be related to teachers' motivation to try out new things and renew their teaching methods (Lam et al., 2010).

### **2.2.3 Individual attributes**

The positive organization essentially involves appreciation of diversity and different types of strengths and competences (Cheung, 2014; Stairs & Galpin, 2013). The original PRIDE theory (Cheung, 2014) emphasizes character strengths, which have shown to promote positive emotions, positive attitudes and positive actions and through these, job performance (Littman-Ovadia, Lavy, & Boiman-Meshita, 2017). In addition to character strengths, a person's natural abilities and talents, personality-related strengths, competences, acquired skills, interests, values, and resources are also important (Bakker & van Woerkom, 2018; Niemiec, 2018; Wood, Linley, Maltby, Kashdan, & Hurling, 2011). In work in which these different types of strengths and competencies meet, a person acts within their "power zone", in which both competence and motivation are at a high level, and the person is enthusiastic, energetic and flourishing (Mayerson, 2015).

The recognition and employment of strengths relate in particular to the competence management and the development of organizations. It is important for people to work doing tasks that maximize the use of their strengths (Bakker & van Woerkom, 2018). The division of labour, team building, and task planning should be based on the strengths of the personnel, and here the role of the immediate supervisor is significant (Bakker, Hetland, Olsen, & Espevik, 2019; van Woerkom, Oerlemans, & Bakker, 2016). It is equally important that management and the entire organization share a common understanding of the importance of strengths for people's well-being and job performance (Bakker & van Woerkom, 2018).

The employment of strengths energizes and promotes people's thriving at work (Bakker & van Woerkom, 2018; Hone, Jarden, Duncan, & Schofield, 2015), and reduces the burden of emotional work and negative emotions at the workplace (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008). Focusing on strengths and resources is particularly important during change, as these can help maintain work engagement and enthusiasm even under extrinsic demands and pressure to change (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Bakker et al., 2019).

The employment of strengths and an appreciative atmosphere also creates the experience of meaningfulness of work. When work is connected to the worker's own strengths, work goals also become personally meaningful and easier to commit to (Martela & Pessi, 2018; Mayerson, 2015). It has been found that work that



offers experiences of meaningfulness can significantly strengthen an individual's performance (Grant, 2008), work engagement (Stairs & Galpin, 2013) and job performance (Steger & Dik, 2013).

#### **2.2.4 Emotional well-being**

The PRIDE theory also includes emotional well-being, which in the original theory also covered well-being at work and occupational safety (Cheung, 2014). The focus of this study is on examining emotional factors, atmosphere and positive emotions (cf. Stairs & Galpin, 2013), because the positive effects of work engagement and enthusiasm are also thought to be based on positive emotions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Frenzel et al., 2018, see also Stairs & Galpin, 2013). This study also considers change as a factor that affects atmosphere and emotions (Hargreaves, 2005).

The atmosphere of an organization refers to the personnel's shared perception of their work environment (Schneider, 2000). These perceptions are influenced by people's individual characteristics, the organization's structural factors, and how people collectively interpret things that happen within the organization (Härtel & Ashkanasy, 2010). Organizational culture also influences atmosphere. For example, it can determine how emotions are expressed at the workplace (Härtel & Ashkanasy, 2010), or whether the atmosphere is fundamentally negative or positive (Härtel, 2008). A positive climate is part of a positive work environment, which helps people flourish (Geue, 2018; Härtel & Ashkanasy, 2010) and experience work engagement (Halbesleben, 2010). Enthusiasm can also be seen as one of the features of a positive atmosphere when people are inspired by each other (Bakker et al., 2011; Cameron et al., 2011; Mroz & Quinn, 2013).

From the perspective of work and educational institution communities' atmosphere, it is essential that positive emotions are social and contagious in nature and that they are transmitted and spread both in the work community and between teachers and students (Frenzel et al., 2018), as well as 'downwards' from management and supervisors to personnel (Tee, 2015). The well-being, enthusiasm and positive emotions of teachers and students are intertwined and built on the everyday interaction process (Frenzel et al., 2018). Positive actions, interaction, relationships and enthusiasm can bring about a 'virtuous circle' which strengthens individual and communal resources and well-being, and also makes it easier to face changes and adversities (Barker Casa & Milton, 2012; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Sekerka & Fredrickson, 2013).

The VET Reform involves change, which provoke many kinds of emotions (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2011; Hargreaves, 2005; Zembylas & Barker, 2007). Educational reforms at least temporarily affect the daily work of teachers and their perceived workload (Day, 2002). Change unsettles the sense of control over work, which can cause frustration and negative emotions (Day, 2002). Studies have shown that teachers' attitudes to reforms vary according to how they feel the reforms

correspond to their professional identity and perceptions of good teaching and teachership (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005; Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2011). Often, however, changes are led by rational processes that do not take into account factors related to identity or emotions (Day, 2000; Zembylas & Barker, 2007). However, from the perspective of well-being and a positive atmosphere, it is important to ensure that teachers have access to support and tools to process change (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2011). Opportunities for positive experiences, successes, and positive feedback help people adapt to change (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2011). Successful change management is thus strongly linked to the leadership of people: acknowledging their feelings and strengthening a positive work atmosphere.

## **2.3 Leadership that enhances enthusiasm**

In this study, leadership refers to both leadership of people and management of issues, both of which are included in the work of immediate supervisors in vocational education (Northouse, 2010). Leading or leadership is also defined as a leader's activity or skills, that can be developed, not as fixed personality traits (Northouse, 2010). The socio-constructivist view sees leadership as interactive activity rather than a one-sided influence on the thoughts or attitudes of those who are under leadership (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010).

This study approaches leadership that enables enthusiasm through the framework of positive organization and leadership. It examines the different positively defined leadership theories or trends that come under the positive leadership concept. The assumption is that positive leadership has the potential to promote teachers' enthusiasm.

The PRIDE theory (Cheung, 2014, 2015) refers to positive, change-promoting leadership using the *dynamic leadership* concept, whereas other positive leadership studies use the more common concept of *positively deviant leadership* (Wooten & Cameron, 2013) or *positive leadership* (Cameron, 2012). In the PRIDE model, leadership is the key element, as leaders and leadership can influence other elements of the positive organization: practices, activities, and resources (Gruman & Saks, 2011); employing human strengths (Bakker et al., 2019; van Woerkom et al., 2016); and relationships and atmosphere (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

First, I look at positive leadership from the perspective of enthusiasm leadership and then leadership in vocational education.

### **2.3.1 Characterization of leadership**

Positive leadership has no well-established theory; it is more a question of a set of positive forms of leadership, which share an encouraging, supportive leadership approach and aim for positive leadership behaviour (Blanch, Gil, Antino, &

Rodriguez-Muñoz, 2016; see also Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011). Under positive leadership theories lie five leadership theories, linked by a positive and humanistic approach (Blanch et al. 2016; Dinh et al., 2014): Transformational (Bass, 1985), Authentic (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), Servant (Greenleaf, 1997), Spiritual (Fry, 2003), and Ethical Leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

Transformational leadership contains the idea of a leader's personal charisma, which enables them to appeal to and influence the emotions of their subordinates (Bass, 1985). According to Bass' definition (1985), a transformational leader builds a trusting relationship with their subordinates and inspires and motivates them to commit to common goals and a common vision. The leader deals with their subordinates on a personal level and acknowledges their individual skills, strengths and needs by inspiring and encouraging them (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership also contains the idea of supporting people's growth and learning (Bass, 2000), and has been widely used in research on educational institutional leadership. A model of transformational leadership has also been adapted for schools (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Studies have shown that transformational leadership of educational institutions promotes teacher collaboration and communal learning (Beverborg et al., 2015; van Oord, 2013). It has shown to help teachers renew and change their teaching practices and through this to promote student learning (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). It has also been suggested that transformational leadership can strengthen the prerequisites for and participation and trust in teamwork and collaboration (Thoonen et al., 2011). The transformational leader acts as a role model in their team, offers their subordinates challenging tasks, and provides feedback so that each person can fulfil their personal potential (Beverborg et al., 2015).

Bush and Glover (2014) also highlight three problem areas when applying transformational leadership in educational institutions. Firstly, it has been considered too leader-centred and it has been suggested that distributed leadership forms would work better in the changing educational world (see also Bottery, 2004). Secondly, in transformational leadership, the objectives of education are mainly governed by legislation, rather than the central "inspirational vision". Thirdly, transformational leadership neglects the values and beliefs on which leadership and influence are based (Bush & Glover, 2014). VET reflects the values of the world of work and industry and commerce in particular, as well those of as education and training, which may contradict each other (Aarni & Pulkkinen, 2015). Therefore, in VET leadership, it is also important to look at values and ethics, which are emphasized in authentic, spiritual and ethical leadership. These leadership theories or trends have also been described by the generic term moral leadership (Bush & Glover, 2014).

Authentic leadership is based on the leader's self-awareness and high morality (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). To be authentic, a leader must be deeply self-aware and

well aware of their own values and beliefs. An authentic leader leads by their own example, and their actions contribute to their subordinates' positive emotions, self-awareness and self-regulation (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Authentic leadership emphasizes personnel development through positive, trusting interaction (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005) and helps people find meaningfulness in work during times of change (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Authentic leadership is a fairly well-established leadership theory and has validated measurement tools (Avolio, Griffith, Wernsing, & Walumbwa, 2013). However, authenticity can also be part of other forms of leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

The principle of servant leadership is that leaders put the needs of others before their own and enable the success of the organization by serving others (Greenleaf, 1997). The qualities of a servant leader are defined by eight characteristics: authenticity, humility, compassion, accountability, courage, altruism, integrity, and listening (Coetzer, Bussin, & Geldenhuys, 2017). A serving leader is responsible and caring, cherishes positive relationships, and empowers and helps clarify the vision (Coetzer et al., 2017). According to research, servant leadership is related to, for example, work atmosphere, the quality of customer service (Coetzer et al., 2017) and experiencing work engagement (De Clercq, Bouckennooghe, Raja, & Matsyborska, 2014; Sousa & Dierendonck, 2017).

Spiritual leadership strives to respond to the individual needs of subordinates that normal leadership may not cover (Blanch et al., 2016). It emphasizes subordinates' intrinsic motivation, vocation, and need to belong, as well as the learning of the organization (Fry, 2003). Spiritual leadership is also connected to an inspiring vision and mission, which encourage people to collaborate, support each other, serve, and commit to their work (Fairholm, 1996; Sweeney & Fry, 2012). Spiritual qualities and virtues such as morality, emotional intelligence, social skills and developing human values are also attached to leaders (Fairholm, 1996). Spiritual leadership is based on faith, hope and the vision of a positive future, which strengthens the sense of meaning in work, promotes personal and professional development, and inspires personnel to strive for better performance (Sweeney & Fry, 2012).

The leadership models described above have a strong ethical dimension (Blanch et al., 2016). There has also been an attempt to create a theory of its own for ethical leadership, which focuses on promoting ethical activity through the leader's own ethical conduct and example (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leadership is believed to promote positive organizational behaviour and work attitudes (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Studies show that the subordinates of an ethical leader perceive meaningfulness in their work and an ability to influence it (Dust, Resick, Margolis, Mawritz, Greenbaum, 2015). Ethical leadership has also shown to be related to job performance (Walumbwa et al., 2011).

### **2.3.2 Positive leadership**

In the definition of leadership associated with the PRIDE theory (Cheung, 2014), positive leaders inspire, challenge, motivate and create an inspiring vision. They foster positive emotions among their subordinates, develop their strengths, acknowledge successes and achievements, and show caring and compassion (Cheung, 2014). Similar characteristics have been linked to 'positive global leadership' (Youssef & Luthans, 2012), which is based on the character strength theory of positive psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In this theory, positive leadership means 'positively deviant' leadership activity that reinforces the strengths, competence and development potential of both the leader and the personnel (Youssef & Luthans, 2012). The definition of positive leadership by Kelloway and colleagues (2013) also refers to positive leadership behaviour that can promote positive emotions and strengthen well-being among personnel (Kelloway, Weigand, McKee, & Das, 2013).

Hannah and colleagues (2009) have looked at positive leadership from the perspective of the leader's positive emotions and their contagion (Hannah, Woolfolk, & Lord, 2009). According to them, positive leadership begins with the leader's thinking, expectations, goals and values, as well as self-development. Positive leadership is thought to promote positive organizational behaviour among personnel, professional development and performance, as well as, for example, work engagement and commitment to work (Hannah et al., 2009). Positive leadership has also shown to be a promising approach during change in educational institutions in which resources are becoming scarcer and education is facing conflicting values and expectations (Dahlvig, 2018).

Positive leadership can also be practised through immediate supervision and teamwork, which is the usual way in which VET is organized (Beverborg et al., 2015). In the Richardson and West's (2013) model of positive team working, the supervisor is the team's most visible and influential member. The supervisor is able to create inspiring goals that are easy to commit to. The supervisor also supports good relationships and builds trust through openness and honesty. The supervisor acknowledges the team's activities, listens, directs discussion, and also has the power to distribute resources (Richardson & West, 2013). A positive team leader gives team members a great deal of positive feedback and prepares them for better performance together (Beverborg et al., 2015).

Teamwork can also be seen as a concrete positive leadership practice that enables the employment of people's different strengths and collaboration. According to Geue (2018), positive leadership practices that promote work engagement are, for example acknowledging successes and good things, maintaining a culture of gratitude and appreciation, emphasizing the meaningfulness of work, employing strengths, fostering trusting collaboration, and listening to the opinions and ideas of the personnel (Geue, 2018). An enthusiasm or work engagement leadership model has also been proposed, which describes enthusiasm leadership as a process

of performance agreement, providing resources and support, and appraisal and feedback (Gruman & Saks, 2011).

Cameron (2012) has defined four positive leadership strategies: positive climate, positive relationships, positive communication, and positive meaning. An indicator has also been developed on the basis of his model, according to which related studies have shown positive leadership to be associated with work engagement (Antino, Gil-Rodríguez, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Borzillo, 2014). According to Cameron (2012), positive leadership emphasizes positive emotions that create a positive atmosphere conducive to creativity, which can further strengthen both individual and communal resources and hence also organizational productivity. A positive leader promotes compassion, forgiveness and gratitude. People are cared for, supported, and encountered on an emotional level, which makes them feel they are appreciated, and in turn further promotes their job performance. Positive leaders invest effort into building positive relationships and energy networks, i.e. surround themselves with positive and inspiring people. A positive leader also pays attention to positive communication and language. They act as a positive role model, are authentic, honest and listen to others. In addition, they promote a sense of meaning of work, so that people feel they can carry out meaningful work aiming for a goal that has value (Cameron, 2012).

In the university context, positive leadership and positive organizational perspectives have been applied in the positive psychology theory of well-being (PERMA, Seligman, 2011; Oades, Robinson, Green, & Spence, 2011). The study showed that a shift towards a positive, inspiring and productive educational institution requires committed leadership that is associated with a positive vision, reciprocal relationships and open communication (Oades et al., 2011). Although positive organization or positive leadership models have not been applied more widely in educational institutes, especially not in VET, we can nevertheless assume on the basis of earlier research that different forms of positive leadership and positive leadership behaviour are also important from the perspective of teachers' enthusiasm.

### **2.3.3 Leadership in vocational education institutions**

The fact that leadership also affects pedagogical activities and pupils' performance makes it particularly important in educational institutions (e.g. Bloom et al. 2015; Coelli & Green, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2008). A leader has been described as a 'catalyst' that indirectly affects student performance and learning outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2008). The closer the leader works with the teachers and the students, the more their actions also affect learning (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). In the context of leading an educational institution, we talk about pedagogical leadership, which emphasizes the special quality of leadership in educational institutions in comparison to that in other organizations (Male &



Palaiologou, 2015). Pedagogical leadership is ethical and value based and is linked to a pedagogical theoretical basis and pedagogical values and goals (Male & Palaiologou, 2015).

The leader plays a decisive role in the organization's emotional climate and, consequently, in the well-being and job performance of its personnel (Wijewardena, Samaratunge, & Härtel, 2014). In educational institutions, this is particularly important because the well-being of personnel influences student well-being (Pietarinen, Soini, & Pyhältö, 2008). Supervisor support and feeling cared for are related to employee well-being and work engagement (Hakanen et al., 2006; Harter & Blacksmith, 2013) as well as to teachers' resilience, i.e. flexibility during change (Gu & Day, 2013). It has been found that the importance of supervisor support becomes greater the more demanding the teacher perceives their work with students to be (Bakker et al., 2007).

The amount and quality of the interaction between supervisor and subordinate has been related to teachers' commitment to their work and organization (Hulpia & Devos, 2010). The supervisor's availability, encouraging and informal interaction, as well as addressing problems when necessary has been considered important (Hulpia & Devos, 2010). Genuine and open interaction with a supervisor is important to achieve a positive and trusting atmosphere, which is highlighted during change (Mishra & Mishra, 2012; Vieira-dos Santos & Gonçalves, 2018). A climate of trust is also a prerequisite for people's willingness to collaborate and share their expertise (Carmeli, Ben-Hador, Waldman, & Rupp, 2009; Mishra & Mishra, 2012), as is required by the Reform.

In times that emphasize participation, collaboration and skills sharing, distributed leadership has become a popular leadership approach (Harris, 2013). 'Teacher leadership' is part of the distributed leadership idea, which can mean, for example, various forms of informal teams and development activities (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Distributed pedagogical leadership, developed from the ideas of distributed leadership, refers in turn to the collaboration and shared responsibility of all members of the school community for student learning (Jäppinen, 2010). Distributed pedagogical leadership has also been studied in Finnish VET (e.g. Jäppinen, 2010; Jäppinen & Maunonen-Eskelinen, 2012). However, more broadly, distributed pedagogical leadership refers to a school community's internal collaboration and the "everyone at school is instructing" idea, and not merely to supervisors' leadership activity (Jäppinen & Maunonen-Eskelinen, 2012).

In addition to well-being and atmosphere, leadership and supervisory work can influence the organization of work, resource allocation and everyday practices (Cameron et al., 2011). Leading everyday work and activities is essential for teachers to be able to focus on their own work (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005). Even the most inspiring vision inevitably leads to frustration if it remains unimplemented (Bush & Glover, 2014). From this point of view, many leadership models used in

school management can be considered one sided (Bush & Glover, 2014). We can expect positive leadership and positive organizational perspectives to provide a comprehensive perspective of promoting leadership in educational institutions and teacher motivation during change: a teacher's work is intensive expert and relationship work that is today characterized by a continuous need to learn new things and renewal (Salmi, Perttula, & Syväjärvi, 2014). The PRIDE theory equally takes into account people, emotions, atmosphere, and practices (Cheung, 2014).

In the management of educational organizations, it is also important that positive leadership is based on the vision of human strengths, potential and striving for good (Caza & Cameron, 2008), that is, the same humanist values as in teaching and learning (Dinh et al., 2014). For this reason also, the views of positive organization and leadership can be considered promising in the VET context for promoting teacher enthusiasm.



### 3 Research questions

This dissertation consists of three sub-studies (I–III) published as articles in international peer-reviewed journals (see List of original articles).

The main objective of the main study was to describe enthusiasm in the work of VET teachers and how work organization and leadership enhances it.

The aim of the main study was approached through three sub-studies as follows:

#### **Sub-study I**

The aim of the first sub-study was to describe the phenomenon of enthusiasm among VET teachers in their work. The following sub-questions were set for this sub-study:

- How do VET teachers describe their enthusiasm?
- What factors strengthen their enthusiasm, according to their descriptions?
- What factors weaken their enthusiasm, according to their descriptions?

#### **Sub-study II**

The aim of the second sub-study was to describe the teachers' perceptions of how organizational factors are associated with the enthusiasm they experience in their work. The sub-study asked:

- How does the PRIDE theory describe leadership and an organization that enhances VET teachers' enthusiasm?

#### **Sub-study III**

The third sub-study aimed to describe leadership that enables teachers' enthusiasm, according to the perceptions of immediate supervisors. The study had the following research questions:

- How do immediate supervisors describe their means of promoting VET teachers' enthusiasm?
- What kind of challenges did the supervisors describe having noticing it?

## **4 Implementation of the study**

The answers to the research questions of this thesis were sought through three sub-studies. Table 2 presents the research questions and related sub-studies and articles along with their data and methods of analysis.

Table 2. Study as a whole: research questions, sub-studies, articles, study population, data and analysis

Research question	Sub-study	Article	Participants	N	Data collection method	Time of data collection	Material	Analysis
How do VET teachers describe their enthusiasm?	I	Wenström, S., Uusiiauti, S., & Määttä, K. (2018). 'The force that keeps you going': Enthusiasm in vocational education and training (VET) teachers' work. <i>International Journal for Research in Vocational Education and Training</i> , 5(4), 244–263. <a href="https://doi.org/10.13152/IJRVET.5.4.1">https://doi.org/10.13152/IJRVET.5.4.1</a>	VET teachers	103	Questionnaire with open-ended questions	2/2016 (35 answers) and 11/2016–3/2017 (68 answers)	Answers to the Webropol questionnaire in Excel format	Conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)
What factors strengthen their enthusiasm, according to their descriptions?								
What factors weaken their enthusiasm, according to their descriptions?								
How does the PRIDE theory describe leadership and organization that enhances vocational education teachers' (VET) enthusiasm?	II	Wenström, S., Uusiiauti, S., & Määttä, K. (2018). How does the PRIDE theory describe leadership and organization that enhances vocational education teachers' (VET) enthusiasm? An analysis of enthusiastic Finnish VET-teachers' perceptions. <i>European Journal of Workplace Innovation</i> , 4(1), 79–94. <a href="http://journal.lula.no/index.php/EJWI/article/view/502">http://journal.lula.no/index.php/EJWI/article/view/502</a>	VET teachers who experience themselves enthusiastic	15	Themed interview method with a semi-structured interview guide	3–4/2018	Interviews as MP3 format 11 h 13 min, transcribed	Directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)
How do immediate supervisors describe their means of promoting VET teachers' enthusiasm?	III	Wenström, S., Uusiiauti, S., & Määttä, K. (2019). What kind of leadership promotes vocational education and training (VET) teachers' enthusiasm at work? <i>International Journal of Research Studies in Psychology</i> , 8(1), 79–90. <a href="https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrsp.2019.4005">https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrsp.2019.4005</a>	VET supervisors, who had teachers as immediate subordinates	15	Themed interview method with a semi-structured interview guide	9–10/2018	Interviews as MP3 format 11 h 36 min transcribed	Conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)
What kind of challenges the supervisors describe having noticing in it								

In all the sub-studies, I was responsible for data collection, data analysis, the results and their interpretation, and the discussion, and also wrote the first version of the theoretical part and the conclusions. The summary section was completely independently written by myself.

#### **4.1 The worldview behind the study**

The starting point of this study is the idea that people have different perceptions and attitudes regarding issues or phenomena, which affect their actions in practice (Marton, 1981). These concepts can be studied using either qualitative or quantitative research methods which are based on differing perceptions of humans and the nature of knowledge and reality (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005). This was a qualitative study and was based on the socio-constructivist worldview (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Worldview means the basic assumptions behind the research that guide its activities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These basic assumptions have also been referred to as paradigms (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), epistemology and ontology (Crotty, 1998). Worldview means the general orientation towards the world and how the nature of the research is perceived (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), i.e. the worldview according to which the researcher acts (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005). The worldview guides the choice of research methods: qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method research approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The way in which we see the world and reality affects how we think we can explore them (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

The basis of the socio-constructivist worldview is that people strive to understand the world in which they live and work, and to give meaning to their experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Crotty, 1998). Due to the diversity of meanings, research is also situated on a broad spectrum of perspectives. The qualitative research approach, with its wide-ranging, open-ended questions and conventional analysis aims to capture both the meanings of the phenomenon that people assign to it and the context to which it is related (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The objects of interest of the socio-constructivist approach are people's interpersonal relationships, the phenomena related to these, and the construction of meanings through interaction (Crotty, 1998; Gergen, 1999). The researchers themselves are also part of research, and their own backgrounds and perspectives influence the interpretation of the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The socio-constructivist approach has also become more common in leadership research, which means that leadership is defined as activity constructed through interaction (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010).

In this study, the socio-constructivist worldview was manifested in that the object of the analysis was the different perspectives of enthusiasm of teachers and

supervisors. The “enthusiasm” phenomenon was examined as that which teachers and supervisors themselves described it, and not, for example, as vigor, dedication and absorption, as measured by work engagement indicators (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Cozby & Bates, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Klassen et al., 2013). Research has shown that these different views are still being formed and have connecting factors that further broaden and deepen our understanding of enthusiasm as a phenomenon and of the factors that influence it. Research results do not provide an absolute, objective perception of enthusiasm, but a new, socially constructed meta-level conception.

The researcher’s own perspectives and prejudices affect the entire research process, as they determine the choice of topic, the research problem, the phrasing of the questions and the selection of methods (Crotty, 1998). My own conception of humankind is based on social constructionism (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Crotty, 1998), and it forms the basis of my research. I do not believe that any single approach or leadership method automatically increases the enthusiasm of teachers in VET organizations. However, through qualitative research, we can determine the different perceptions and perspectives of enthusiasm as widely as possible and find the general principles that make it possible for school communities to become more inspiring places in which to work and study (Doldor, Silvester, & Atewologun, 2017). It is a question of the situations, practices, interaction and interpersonal relationships which each member of an organization can influence through their own actions and their own roles (Rauhala, 1991). On the other hand, my study assumes that organizations can facilitate their members’ experiences of autonomy, competence and relatedness, which can promote enthusiasm and motivation for work (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The goal is to find leadership and organization methods that support people’s positive potential, activeness and desire to learn and develop (Caza & Cameron, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Human activity, in its environment and social relations, is dialectic and reciprocal (Rauhala, 1991). Human activity cannot be causally predicted or explained by the same things always happening in the same situations, because identical situations never occur (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Rauhala, 1991). A person develops in relation to their life situation, and through development, situations are also experienced differently (Rauhala, 1991). According to the principles of social constructionism, we strive to understand the phenomena under study in their social context, to make them understandable and thus find ways to influence their course (Rauhala, 1991). This makes it meaningful to determine people’s perceptions of the factors that enable enthusiasm in an organization. What a person experiences and thinks inevitably affects their beliefs, attitudes, and actions as a professional and a member of the work community (Doldor et al., 2017; Stacey, 2007).

Qualitative research has been seen as the natural approach to research on education (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). It has also been used in organizational research,

especially when the aim has been to study motivation, well-being at work, leadership or organizational changes (Doldor et al., 2017; Ince et al., 2016). In recent years, qualitative research has become more common in both “traditional” and positive psychology (Gergen, Josselson, & Freeman, 2015; Rich, 2016). This study leans on positive psychology, which explores the flourishing and well-being of people and communities (Seligman & Csikszentmihályi, 2000).

## **4.2 A multi-method approach**

The aim of this study is to describe the perceptions of teachers’ enthusiasm by asking the teachers themselves and immediate supervisors in education about the topic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Examining people’s different perceptions brings my research close to phenomenography, the scientific philosophical background of which lies in constructivism and phenomenology (Marton, 1981). Phenomenography has been utilized in education in particular, for example in the study of different learning concepts and as a tool for development work (Given, 2008). Phenomenography is interested in the qualitative differences in people’s thinking: the different ways in which people experience things, interpret, understand and conceptualize reality (Marton, 1981), and how different perceptions are formed and what they are by nature (Given, 2008). Variation theory, which has developed alongside phenomenography, expands this examination from describing the perceptions of the phenomenon to studying the variation in the understanding of the phenomenon, i.e. why the ways of perceiving are what they are and how they can be understood (Given, 2008). As a phenomenon, it would have been possible to study enthusiasm through, for example, narrative research via teachers’ and supervisors’ stories, or phenomenologically, i.e. by examining people’s experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Another alternative would have been a design study, with the aim of finding viable solutions for the everyday life of communities through a dialogue between theory and practice (Andersson & Shattuck, 2012).

I chose a qualitative multi-method approach for this study, combining different methods of data collection and analysis and different theoretical perspectives (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). The reason for choosing a multi-method research approach is that my aim was to obtain the most diverse understanding possible of teachers’ enthusiasm and the factors that influence it, highlighting the perspective and voice of teachers and supervisors (Cozby & Bates, 2012; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Another aim was to examine the theories and models of positive organizational research (Sub-study II) in the VET context (see Given, 2008) and find ways to use these in practice in the management and development of educational institutions (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). Practical and applied studies in, for example, nursing science have used the generic qualitative approach when aiming to examine and try

to understand a phenomenon, process or the perspectives of those involved (Cooper & Endacott, 2007; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013).

Social life phenomena have proven too complex to be studied using a one-dimensional statistical method (Flick, 2018; Maykut & Morehouse, 2005). No single research method in itself is so comprehensive that it could create a perfect picture of the phenomenon (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). Each qualitative method reveals only a part of reality (Morse & Chung, 2003). By combining different research methods, that is, using multiple methods, I strived for a holistic overview of the phenomenon under investigation (Morse & Chung, 2003) as this looks at phenomena from a variety of perspectives (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). The term 'multiple-methods research' has been used to describe research, which covers mixed-method research that combines quantitative and qualitative research, as well as qualitative multi-methods, which also include the concept of triangulation (Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Flick, 2018).

Denzin (1978) distinguishes four different forms of triangulation: data triangulation collects information from many different informant groups; in investigator triangulation, multiple researchers interview or observe; theory triangulation takes more theoretical perspectives into account; and methodological triangulation combines different data collection methods. Originally, triangulation was considered merely a validation method for research (Denzin, 1978), but its aim has later been claimed to also be to acquire a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Denzin, 1989). Flick (2018) also considers triangulation a research strategy: if the research topic requires different approaches, it is useful to also have more researchers (investigator triangulation) as they bring different perspectives to the research (theory triangulation). This in turn creates the basis for using different methods (methodological triangulation). The use of several methods, in turn produces different data in a different form (data triangulation) (Flick, 2018). This study used triangulation on these levels, which are described in more detail in Table 6, in conjunction with the assessment of the study's reliability (Chapter 4.6).

In a multimethod study, as in qualitative research in general, the research problem also changes shape during the research as a result of new findings (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). The previous study steers the next one, expanding on and strengthening previous results, so the results together create an overall picture of the phenomenon (Morse & Chung, 2003). The results of Sub-study I (questionnaire) made me want to more thoroughly examine observations of the work community, organization and supervisory work through interviews. At the same time, I decided to include supervisors as interviewees, so that my examination of leadership would not be one sided and depend on only the teachers' descriptions (see Meyer, 2017). In this way, I believed that a qualitative multi-method study would offer additional perspectives and understanding to our research, which may have been difficult to find using only one research method (Darbyshire, MacDougall, & Schiller, 2005).



### 4.3 Data collection methods

The sub-studies used a web-based questionnaire with open-ended questions (I) and semi-structured interviews (II and III). Sub-studies I and III used conventional content analysis and Sub-study II used directed content analysis. One proposed form of data-based research is also the abductive (Eskola & Suoranta, 2014) or theory-directed (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009) method. This means that theoretical links and previous research were used to create the frame of the interview and to analyse the data, although it was primarily based on the researcher's own understanding (Galletta, 2012; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009).

Next, I describe the sub-studies' research methods in more detail and present the reasons for their selection and suitability for the study.

#### 4.3.1 Sub-study I: Questionnaire study

Sub-study I was conducted as a web-based survey, which I considered to be able to effectively reach a large group of teachers (Best & Harrison, 2009). I elicited background information on gender, age group, teacher experience, educational institution, educational field, educational background, and working as a group leader. After this, I asked the respondent to evaluate on a Likert-scale of 1–4 how enthusiastic they felt about their work. I elicited the responses to the research questions using open-ended questions: How does enthusiasm (or lack of enthusiasm) manifest itself in your work? Which factors strengthen your enthusiasm at work? Which factors weaken your enthusiasm at work? The survey questions are presented in Appendix 1.

The aim of using a questionnaire is to broadly examine and describe the research topic (Cohen et al., 2011). Questionnaires can use both open- and closed-ended questions, although open-ended questions require more effort and a very long questionnaire can affect willingness to respond (Best & Harrison, 2009). This survey had three open-ended questions. Their purpose was to determine the teachers' own perceptions and what things they consider important (Darbyshire et al., 2005).

The reliability of a questionnaire is influenced by, for example, the phrasing of the questions, its context, and its length (Dale, 2006). Respondents may also interpret questions differently to the way in which the researcher has intended (Cozby & Bates, 2012). In this study, the questions were phrased simply, and based on the responses, no misunderstandings seemed to arise. The open-ended questions were not restricted in terms of response length, so the participants could respond as lengthily and in as much detail as they wanted. The responses I received were usually several sentences long, although a few one-word responses also emerged in the data (e.g. "*supervisor*", "*students*"). In these cases, the significance of the response remained minimal, which in turn was the reason for acquiring more in-depth information through the interviews in Sub-study II. However, in the early stages of the questionnaire, it was



useful to obtain information on the research phenomenon from a fairly large group of teachers, which helped to create an overall picture and understanding of teachers' enthusiasm as a phenomenon (Cozby & Bates, 2012; Galletta, 2012).

#### **4.3.2 Sub-studies II and III: Semi-structured interviews**

The data collection method for the second sub-study was a semi-structured interview, the themes and preliminary questions of which were formed from the elements of the PRIDE theory (Cheung, 2014; Galletta, 2012; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The frame of the interview was designed on a theoretical level, but the interviews were in the language familiar to the interviewees (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Before beginning the interview, I informed the teacher interviewees of the study's purpose, recording and the confidentiality of the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). First, I asked the teachers to freely describe their own work and the inspiring factors related to it (Galletta, 2012). The freedom to plan their own working hours (positive practice), for example, possibly arose already at this stage. After this I asked more detailed questions about each element of the PRIDE theory (Galletta, 2012). The phrasing of the questions aimed for simplicity, concreteness and open-endedness (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). For example, in relation to positive practices, I asked "*Can you tell us about methods or practices that promote your enthusiasm?*" or concerning relationships "*What is the impact of your work community's interaction and collaboration on your enthusiasm?*". At the end, the respondents had the opportunity to add other important perspectives on enthusiasm (Galletta, 2012). The frame of the Sub-study II interview is presented in Appendix 2.

Sub-study III was also conducted as a semi-structured interview. The themes and preliminary questions of the interview were based more loosely on the results of Sub-study II and on the theoretical knowledge of positive leadership (Cameron et al., 2011; Cameron, 2012; Galletta, 2012; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The background questions elicited the supervisor's own work experience and educational background. Next, I asked the supervisors to freely tell me about enthusiasm and its promotion in teacher's work and their work community (Galletta, 2012). After this I asked more detailed questions. For example, regarding atmosphere I asked: "*As supervisor, how do you think you can promote a positive atmosphere?*" or regarding strengths "*How do you take into account the different strengths of teachers?*". At the end, the interviewees could report anything else they thought was relevant to the topic (Galletta, 2012). The frame of the Sub-study III interview is presented in Appendix 3.

Interviewing as a data collection method is based on listening to people's own views (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The semi-structured interview is a suitable method when there is enough information on a topic or phenomenon to be able to create questions, but not so much information that the responses would be predictable (Galletta, 2012). A semi-structured interview proceeds on the basis

of themes and preliminary questions built on previous research data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The interview uses open-ended questions, the initial order of which is logically designed so that the whole research topic is comprehensively addressed (Galletta, 2012). The purpose is to ask everyone the same things, but the form and order of the questions may vary (Galletta, 2012). As is characteristic of interaction, the respondents' responses guide the course of the interviews and what was asked and how (Galletta, 2012). Although theory is utilized in the formulation of the questions, the focus is still on people's experiences, also giving space for new meanings (Galletta, 2012).

#### **4.4 Selection of study participant**

In the selection of study participants, I used the principle of purposeful selection, typical of qualitative research, i.e. I invited people I believed would best provide information on the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Galletta, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sandelowski, 2000). Both the questionnaire (Sub-study I) and the interview invitations (Sub-studies II and III) were sent through many different channels: emails in my own networks, email addresses taken from educational institutions' web-pages, mailing lists of organizations, and social media channels and groups (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn). I also asked people to forward the questionnaire link or interview invitation. The term convenience sampling (Brewer & Hunter, 2006) has been used to describe this method. As I approached the study participants through many different channels and networks, it is difficult to estimate the response rate, i.e. how many of those who saw the questionnaire or interview invitation actually participated. In Sub-Study II, I presented a direct interview invitation to 21 people, 11 of whom agreed and 4 of whom enrolled via social media. In Sub-study III, I presented a direct interview invitation to 29 people, 14 of whom agreed, and 3 of whom enrolled via social media. In Sub-study III, 17 interviews were conducted, of which only 15 were transcribed and used in the study due to the large amount of material. It should be noted that some of the directly approached people reacted positively to the idea of an interview, but we were unable to find a suitable time to conduct it. The cover letters attached to the study participation invitations are provided in Appendices 4 to 6.

Sub-study I aimed to recruit questionnaire respondents who were VET teachers. The study population consisted of 103 Finnish VET teachers, 70% of whom were women and 64% of whom were aged 40 to 60. In terms of age and gender distribution, the study population represented Finnish VET teachers relatively well (Kumpulainen, Lahdenkauppi, & Meriläinen, 2014; Pitkänen & Kumpulainen, 2014). The distribution of the participants' fields of education was also very similar to that in Finnish VET in general (Kumpulainen et al., 2014). The majority of the study

population had a higher or lower university degree, and except for one respondent, teacher's pedagogical qualifications. Forty-three per cent of the study population also had a special needs teacher qualification. The majority of the respondents, 76%, worked in a vocational educational institution, 22% in a vocational special education institution and 2% in a liberal educational institution. Detailed demographic information on the study population is presented in Appendix 7.

Sub-study II sought to recruit teachers who felt enthusiastic about their work so that they could provide information on the research topic. The study population consisted of 15 interviewees, representing 6 VET providers operating all over Finland, 13 different training units/teams/supervisors and 11 different teaching areas/subjects. Eleven of the interviewees were women and four were men. The age of the interviewees ranged between about 40 and 60, and teacher experience ranged from 4 to over 30 years. The interviews were conducted face-to-face or via Skype in March–April 2018. The interview data totalled 11 hours 13 minutes. The average duration of an interview was about 45 minutes. The longest interview lasted 1 hour and 24 minutes and the shortest 38 minutes.

Sub-study III sought to recruit VET supervisors as interviewees, who had teachers as their direct subordinates. The study population consisted of 15 interviewees (10 women and 5 men representing 8 different training providers and 13 different units/establishments). The most common title among the study participants was head of education (11). Most of the interviewees had a higher university degree (12, master's degree from a university or a university of applied sciences). Two respondents had a bachelor's degree and one had a college degree. The respondents had undergone their supervisor training either as part of their own degree or as separate further vocational qualification studies: nine had a leadership specialist vocational qualification and one had a supervisor's vocational qualification. The respondents had also participated in supervisor training organized by the employer. All the supervisors had worked in teaching for at least 1.5 years and at most about 20 years, and all but one had a teacher's pedagogical qualification. Several respondents had acquired their supervisory experience already when working in their own professional field. They had worked as supervisors in the field of education for at least 2 years and at most over 20 years. The majority (10) of the respondents had worked as immediate supervisors in education for three to six years. The supervisors had a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 43 subordinates, with an average of 26 direct subordinates. The Sub-study III interviews were conducted face-to-face or via Skype in September–October 2018. The interview data totalled 11 hours 36 minutes. The average duration of an interview was about 46 minutes. The longest interview lasted 55 and the shortest 38 minutes.

The study consisted of three sub-studies, the study population, data collection method used, time of data collection, research data and method of analysis of which are presented in Table 2 at the beginning of Chapter 4.

## 4.5 Analysis

The data analysis method in all three sub-studies was qualitative content analysis: in Sub-studies I and III, it was conventional and in Sub-study II it was directed. I next describe the implementation of the sub-studies' analyses in more detail.

### 4.5.1 *Sub-studies I and III: Conventional content analysis*

Conventional content analysis is suitable when there is no previous theory on the topic or it is insufficient (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The categories are not defined in advance, but are formed on the basis of the data, i.e. they are based on the perspectives produced by the participants (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Content analysis can be used to develop concepts, phenomena, or models, but not to form a new theory (as in grounded theory), and conclusions are not drawn on the relationships between concepts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Data analysis in Sub-study I began by first importing the questionnaire data into an Excel file. The responses were then subdivided into meaning units, i.e. a set of words, phrases or sentences related to the same meaning (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). One response typically contained several meaning units, so 103 responses produced a total of 754 meaning units.

The actual analysis was carried out in three phases (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009), as illustrated in Table 3. In the data reduction phase, the questionnaire data were reduced to discard the irrelevant content. In the second phase, the material was clustered, i.e. grouped according to content similarities into sub-categories, which were given names corresponding to their content. In the third phase, the subcategories were combined to the extent that was meaningful from the perspective of the data. The main categories thus formed represent the study's most important information (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009).

Table 3. Example of Sub-study I analysis

<p>Question: How does your enthusiasm manifest itself?</p> <p>Response: "I constantly try to develop myself as a teacher and my teaching methods. I'm not bogged down in old models; I always try to think of new methods to suit different students and individual study paths. My enthusiasm also manifests itself when I try to make students' individual education plans (IEP) and individual learning plans (ILP) as student-oriented as possible in adherence with the quality standards of the educational institution". (15)</p>			
Meaning units	Reduced expression	Sub-category	Main category
I constantly try to develop myself as a teacher	Developing one's own teachership	Developing one's own skills	Willingness to develop of ones work and expertise
[I constantly try to develop] my teaching methods.	Developing one's own skills	Development and renewal of teaching, teaching materials and learning environments	Willingness to develop of ones work and expertise
I'm not bogged down in old models; I always try to think of new methods to suit different students and individual study paths.	Developing student-oriented methods and individual paths	Development and renewal of teaching, teaching materials and learning environments	Willingness to develop of ones work and expertise
My enthusiasm also manifests itself in that I try to make students' individual education plans (IEP) and individual learning plans (ILP) as student-oriented as possible.	Making IEPs and ILPs as student-oriented as possible	Student-oriented activities	Dedication to the job and good job performance
I try to make students' IEPs and ILPs...in adherence with the quality standards of the educational institution.	Making IEPs and ILPs adhere to quality standards.	Planning and carrying out teaching	Dedication to the job and good job performance

Sub-study III's interview data were transcribed verbatim into text files. Data analysis began in a word processing program, in which I distinguished the meaning units in each interview, which were initially marked in different colours on the basis of content consistency (Graneheim & Lundman 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The length of the text excerpts ranged from one to a few sentences (cf. Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). After this, I gathered the meaning units coded in each colour into an analysis file in which I verified the code's validity and generated reduced expressions. In the second phase of the analysis, I formed 12 sub-categories from the codes, and by combining these, four main categories (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Table 4 illustrates the analysis of the Sub-study III data.

Table 4. Example of Sub-study III analysis

Meaning units	Reduced expression	Sub-category	Main category
And then I feel that, I'm a so-called expert leader, and that in a way, I enable the ideas and thoughts of our teachers and instructors, so that things could develop like this or even everyday activities, then I'm involved in these things, and of course deciding on the things that I should be deciding on (IS8).	The supervisor enables and moves things forward	Leadership of enthusiasm and opportunities	Focus on teachers' development

#### 4.5.2 Sub-study II: Directed content analysis

Directed content analysis is useful when the existing theory needs supplementing, expanding or testing (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In this case, the existing theory and related research help form the research question (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). Compared to conventional, the directed analysis process is more structured, as the basis for classifying the data is the categories formed from the existing theory (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). If necessary, the categories are supplemented or reformulated (Hsieh & Shannon 2005).

In Sub-study II, the interview data were transcribed verbatim into a text file and analysed in a word processing program. From the interview data, I selected the meaning units coded according to the PRIDE theory (Cheung, 2014) into five main categories 1) positive practices, 2) relationship enhancement, 3) individual attributes 4) (positively) deviant leadership, and 5) emotional well-being (see also Graneheim & Lundman 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The meaning units ranged in length from one to a few sentences (cf. Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). After this, the text excerpts classified into the same main category were copied into a separate file in which the reduction of expressions, sub-category formation, and specification continued. Data analysis is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. Example of Sub-study II analysis

Meaning units	Reduced expression	Sub-category	Main category
There are in-house views too, that if you want to emphasize, you know, like studying something alongside it, then are there channels to like, change a job description or supplement it, or in a way, you know what I'm getting at, that you don't get stuck in that moment, but that you like, discuss the fact that there are channels that are open inside the organization too, (T1)	Career development opportunities are needed	Practices enhancing development of work and professional growth	Positive practices

## 4.6 Reliability

Many perspectives have been presented to ensure the reliability of qualitative research, such as the assessment of the dependability of the factors influencing the research situation, and consideration of transferability and conformability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; see also Elo et al., 2014). It has also been considered important to examine the researcher's own position, the compatibility of the study methodology as a whole, the adherence to precision and accuracy, and to strive for analytical interpretation of results (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). Since the reader can only evaluate the quality of the study on the basis of the research report, it is important that this provides sufficiently detailed information on the study, its approaches and methods, and carefully describes the research process (Caelli et al., 2003; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002). It is also believed that triangulation, which belongs to the multi-method approach improves the reliability of a study (Brewer & Hunter, 2006).

### Multi-method approach

It is common for a specific phenomenon, such as work engagement and enthusiasm, to be repeatedly examined using the same methods, which risks the possibility of similar bias in the research (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). In a multi-method study, the weaknesses and strengths of different methods compensate for each other, which increases the theoretical and empirical validity of the research (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). Triangulation, which is part of multi-method research, was utilized in this study by combining different data and methods, as shown in Table 6 (Brewer & Hunter, 2006).

*Table 6. Triangulation in this study*

Investigator triangulation	Theory triangulation	Methodological and data triangulation
In addition to myself, the research supervisors contributed to the writing of the articles and brought theoretical and methodological perspectives to the study.	The study used several different theoretical approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• definition of teacher enthusiasm (Keller et al., 2016)</li> <li>• work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002)</li> <li>• PRIDE theory (positive organizational index), (Cheung, 2014)</li> <li>• positive leadership theories (e.g. Cameron, 2012)</li> </ul>	<p>Data collection methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• questionnaire</li> <li>• semi-structured interview</li> </ul> <p>Analysis methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conventional content analysis (data-based)</li> <li>• directed content analysis (theory-driven)</li> </ul> <p>Represented in the material</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• different fields of education</li> <li>• different organizations</li> <li>• teachers and immediate supervisors</li> </ul>



Triangulation examines the research question from different perspectives (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). According to the confirmability principle, results obtained from different perspectives and different methods should be consistent with each other (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). In qualitative research, interpretations are also supported by previous studies and theories (Eskola & Suoranta, 2014; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, it should be noted that theories may also steer the researcher and the participants (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

In terms of the reliability of multi-method research, it is considered important that each part of the data is collected separately, so that the previous method or research phase does not affect the next (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). In this study, my questionnaire was based on open-ended questions first (see Chapter 4.3.1). Because the questionnaire was conducted completely anonymously, it is impossible to know whether any of the teachers interviewed later participated in this questionnaire. In any case, participation in the questionnaire is unlikely to have affected the interview. The opposite effect could have been possible because the themed interview could also have influenced the respondent to answer the questionnaire in the same way.

The data collection also sought to take into account appropriate timing (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). The academic year of teachers and supervisors is marked by different phases, and the busiest times are at the beginning and the end of the semesters. The interviews (Sub-study II and III) were naturally at a less busy time, as they required participants to book a time. In Sub-study I, the questionnaire was spread over a wide time span and different times of the academic year. Willingness to think about enthusiasm is probably dependent on one's situation at work and the time of the academic year (Cohen et al., 2011). The scheduling of the study also influences how the researcher's own understanding of the subject develops as the research progresses (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). As the different research stages followed each other relatively quickly in this study, it can be assumed that the knowledge and skills of the researcher had no time to change crucially in terms of affecting the reliability of the study (Brewer & Hunter, 2006).

## **Dependability**

In terms of the reliability of the study, it was important to evaluate the researcher's own skills (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) emphasize that the researcher must have in-depth knowledge of the research topic and context to be able to ask questions and steer the interview with further questions. According to them, an interview study is not a technical exercise and has no conditional rules; it is more a matter of interaction. A skilled researcher assesses the situation and chooses the most appropriate questioning technique (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I interviewed 24 people for my first master's thesis in sociolinguistics in 2004. In this study, my interview skills developed through a total of 32 interviews. I felt that after the first interviews of each sub-study, my management of the themes and my ability to



remember the issues to ask about developed. I also feel that my interactive skills and in-depth knowledge of the research theme and the VET context helped me conduct the interviews. The interviewees' everyday work was familiar to me, because I myself have worked in VET organizations since 2005. I believe that interviewing would have been challenging if I as an interviewer had not been familiar with the practices, organization or terminology of VET. I have also learnt about interaction through a long career in teaching and counselling in adult education as well as personnel and management development, i.e. teachers and supervisors are familiar interlocutors to me. The importance of interaction skills is also emphasized by the fact that interviews can provoke different feelings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In this study, the most emotional topics were the ongoing changes in the organization. After the interview, several interviewees reported that it had been a positive experience, even empowering (see also Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The interview situation itself also affects study reliability. This is due to the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees, which is also influenced by the interviewer's own attitudes, prejudices and previous knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Galletta, 2012; Graneheim, Lindgren, & Lundman, 2017; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The researcher's prejudices affect, for example, the way in which questions are asked and further questions are formulated, and naturally, the interpretation of results (Caelli et al., 2003; Graneheim et al., 2017). However, it should be noted that questions—both in the interview and in the questionnaire—may mean different things to different people (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Both methods also require good written or oral expression of the study participants (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). Moreover, it is impossible to assess whether the interviewees' responses reflect reality or whether they are a product of the interview situation (Peräkylä, 2011).

Reliability is also linked to the selection of participants, through whether they have experience of the topic under study (Graneheim et al., 2017). For this reason, this study utilized the principle of purposeful sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and convenience sampling (Waterfield, 2018). Waterfield (2018) considers the advantage of convenience sampling to be that the interviewees are easily available through the researcher's own contacts, which saves time. A study population thus obtained of course differs from the whole population, but this is the case in qualitative research in general: the sample is always non-representative. The reliability of research conducted through convenience sampling can be increased by describing the demographic data of the study population and possibly comparing it to the rest of the population, as was done in this study. The intention is that in this way the readers themselves can evaluate the representativeness of the sample. It also enables diversity of the study population, as well as the inclusion of all the intended individuals (Waterfield, 2018). In this study, the starting point was as diverse a selection of interviewees as possible from vocational educational institutes

of different sizes, different fields of education and from different parts of Finland, which required a great deal of email correspondence, following up on invitations and arranging interview times.

Another reason for using convenience sampling is that positive psychology studies have typically examined 'positive deviance' (Cameron, 2012; Spreitzer & Sonenshein 2003). In this study, it should be noted that some of the participants were selected from the researcher's own networks, which may also involve 'like-mindedness': enthusiasm, being involved in development projects and people working in special education. On the basis of the study, these issues can also be linked to each other: enthusiasm can encourage participation in the development of work and one's own expertise, for example, through special needs teacher studies. Although qualitative research does not strive for generalization, it is still worth considering how the study population differs from those who did not participate in the study (Hänninen, 2016). When participation in a study is voluntary, it is likely that participants will feel that the research topic is personally important and close to their hearts, thus representing 'positive deviance' (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Hänninen, 2016). However, this may affect the transferability of the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Graneheim et al., 2017).

### **Transferability and consistency**

The results of qualitative research are not intended to be generalized, but in this case, they can also be extended to apply to other teachers and training organizations (applicability, Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the participants represented different fields of education and teams, as well as different training organizations in terms of size, ownership and location (Shenton, 2004). Despite the uniqueness of the individuals and work environments, the study aimed to determine the principles that can help teachers feel enthusiasm at work (Doldor et al., 2017). A detailed description of the study population and context helps the reader evaluate how the results can be applied in different environments (Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Elo et al., 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004; Waterfield, 2018). Cultural background must also be taken into account in the transferability of research results: enthusiasm is an ideal in teacher's work in Western countries and North America, but not necessarily universally (Keller et al., 2016).

In order for future researchers to repeat the study consistently, the research process must be described in detail, even though a new study is not expected to produce the same results (Shenton, 2004). Adequate data samples help the reader evaluate the reliability of the results and the interpretations of the researcher (Elo et al., 2014), even though each researcher pays attention to different things according to their own understanding and experience (Sandelowski, 2000; cf. Lincoln, & Guba, 1985; Elo et al., 2014).

## **Saturation**

Although the amount of the data is not the key factor in qualitative research, it still needs to be sufficient to show variation (Graneheim et al., 2017). Therefore, the description of data saturation (Caelli et al., 2003) was also used as a reliability criterion for this study. In Sub-study I, saturation was indicated by all the main categories existing already in the first phase of data collection, when 35 responses were collected and analysed (cf. Elo et al., 2014, preliminary analysis). In Sub-studies II and III, which were based on interviews, I utilized the 10+3 criterion, which means that after ten analysed interviews, there should be three interviews that do not produce new content (Francis et al., 2010). In this study, new content meant new sub-categories or sub-category-related specifications. The 10+3 criterion was met in Sub-study II, in that new sub-categories or sub-category specifications were provided by Interviews 11 and 13, but Interviews 12, 14 and 15 did not produce any new content. In Sub-study III, no new sub-categories emerged after the ninth interview.

## **Researcher's position**

The researcher's position is connected to both the reliability of the research and ethics, which means the motives arising from the researcher's own background and experience, the prejudices and values that have influenced the choice of research topic and methods (Caelli et al., 2003). In qualitative research, the role of the researcher is active and the researcher him/herself is also a research instrument (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Galletta, 2012; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Therefore, I aimed for reflexivity and self-criticism throughout the examination process (Elo et al, 2014; Galletta, 2012). I also tried to provide sufficient information on myself and my background (Maykut & Morehouse, 2005). In addition, as a researcher I tried to remain neutral, and not identify too much with the participants, despite sharing similar views with them. In this study, neutrality and objectivity meant taking distance from and obtaining perspectives from both the participants and my own views (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Shenton, 2004).

I myself am an 'enthusiastic teacher', who has had the opportunity to study VET in the role of developer, coordinator, expert, and trainer of teachers and supervisors. Thus, I have personal experience and insight into the research topic: the manifestation of enthusiasm and the factors that both promote and weaken enthusiasm on the level of work, work community, organization and management. My interest to scientifically study this phenomenon was aroused by my personal experience of the importance of enthusiasm in my own work as well as my everyday observations in different work communities, which also guided my choice of research topic and methodologies. To a large extent, I was able to identify with the views of my interviewees. However, my goal was to give a voice to teachers and supervisors (Cozby & Bates, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) on the one hand, and to scientifically

explain why it is important to promote enthusiasm and how this can be done on the other. This guided my choice to use the qualitative research method, which I have further explained in Chapters 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. I aimed for accuracy in describing the research process in this report (Caelli et al, 2003; Cooper & Endacott, 2007; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002).

## **4.7 Ethics**

The ethical evaluation of the research leans on the perspectives of Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), which are especially associated with interview studies. They emphasize that ethical perspectives relate to the whole research process: its different phases and the decisions made during them (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). According to the socio-constructivist view, knowledge is built and formed through interaction (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), in this case between researcher and study participant, which means it is dependent on the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This relationship can be influenced by, for example, the power or authority relations between the researcher and the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). No formal power relations (supervisor–subordinate, teacher–student) emerged in this study. Nevertheless, the researcher is always seen to have more power than the participant (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

It is important that interviews have a safe, free atmosphere, and that the interviewee dares to talk about personal matters (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In my opinion, it was possible to influence the atmosphere by making the interview situation as calm and comfortable as possible. The face-to-face interviews were conducted in a wide variety of facilities: at the workplaces and canteens of the interviewees, some of which were noisy, making recording difficult. Before the interview, we chatted about unrelated things and the participants' lives. The disadvantages of the Skype interviews were small technical problems and the lack of non-verbal communication; whereas the advantages were greater confidentiality and a feeling of privacy (Hewson, 2017). In addition, in individual interviews, group opinion has no influence, as it does in group interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In this study, confidentiality and assurance of the study participants' anonymity was central, to enable them to honestly express their views (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In Sub-study I, the online questionnaire responses were completely anonymous, i.e. even the researcher did not know who answered the questionnaire. All names were removed from the data, and the responses were numbered sequentially. In Sub-studies II and III, participation in the interview was voluntary and confidential. For example, the interviewees were not approached by a group message or through the organization's management, but directly, so that no one except the researcher had any information on who had been invited to or who participated in the study. I also

ensured that I did not mark the name or subject of the appointment in my electronic calendar or in the Skype invitations.

The interviewees were assured that any identifiable information that might be present in the data would not be published, and no one would have access to the data, except for the researcher and the external transcriptionist, who was bound by a confidentiality agreement. The study data were anonymized by removing names and other identifying information, and by assigning the participants a code from T1 to T15 (teachers, Sub-study II) or IS1 to IS15 (immediate supervisors, Sub-study III) (Galletta, 2012). The data files (recordings, transcripts) were retained under personal user IDs and handled with care. The study followed the general principles of research ethics. It received no external funding or other interests except for the Rector's Grant awarded by University of Lapland for the translation and finalization of the summary section at the end of the study. The study was not ordered by any party; it was based solely and exclusively on my own personal interest.

Finally, one might question how the research benefits the participants, the group that they represent, or more generally people's circumstances (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The goal of this study was to give a voice to teachers and supervisors (Cozby & Bates, 2012) as well as to promote enthusiasm and through this, well-being and learning in VET. This is why the reporting aimed for objectivity by equally hearing different voices (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Ethics also involves a critical review of one's research topic. The theoretical background of this study lies in positive psychology, which aims for individuals' and communities well-being and good lives (Seligman & Csikszentmihályi, 2000). However, it has also been found that "good" or "positive" are relative concepts that have mainly been studied in the values of Western society (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008). Hence, the positiveness of enthusiasm depends on the situation in which it occurs, as well as on what different people value. In addition, researchers have expressed concern about whether enthusiasm or work engagement can cause burnout (Bakker et al., 2011), neglect of other areas of life, and narrowly focusing on only things that inspire at the expense of other work tasks (Halbesleben, 2011). The field of positive psychology sees a good life as living according to the "golden mean" (Niemic, 2018, see also Bakker et al., 2011). The most important thing is that everyone finds a positive, active orientation in their work, and that every VET organization could be a 'positive organization' that enables enthusiasm among its members. Positivity does not mean ignoring problems and challenges; it means providing better conditions for dealing with difficult situations and recovering from adversity and change (Fredrickson & Dutton, 2008; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002).

## 5 Results

### 5.1 Enthusiasm in VET teachers' work

Sub-study I examined how teachers perceive their enthusiasm as being manifested and what kind of factors they feel strengthen or weaken their enthusiasm. Almost all of the 103 VET teachers who participated in the study were enthusiastic about their work. Only ten respondents felt little or no enthusiasm for their work, the remaining 93 (90%) claimed to be very or fairly enthusiastic. The participants described their enthusiasm primarily as a willingness to develop themselves and their work. Secondly, the teachers said that enthusiasm made them invest effort in their work, which was reflected in accomplishing things in their work. Thirdly, the teachers described positive emotions and well-being related to enthusiasm at work and in the work community.

Development of work and expertise were related to the desire to develop their own teaching and guidance counselling to meet the individual needs of students. *"I think all the time, how I could teach better, more clearly, and more concretely everything"*. (5). In addition, enthusiasm was perceived as manifesting as a desire to develop one's own skills through training and experimenting with new things. *"After this long career, I still do not perceive myself as stuck, but I always find energy to get excited about new ways of working"*. (25)

According to the teacher's descriptions, dedication to the job and investing effort in work was manifested by a willingness to do more than the bare minimum. This was also accompanied by keeping up to date with issues and developments in their field and using and applying the latest research data in their teaching. The teachers also described their enthusiasm as being manifested in the effort to plan and carry out their own teaching in a diverse, inspiring way, encouraging students and dealing with them individually. *"Even during free time, I (even unconsciously) plan future encounters with students and forthcoming courses, take notes [about ideas]"*. (37)

Enthusiasm was also manifested as positive emotions such as good mood, joyfulness, positivity and enjoyment: *"[Twenty-three] 23 years and yet it has not felt like work. Every morning I want to go to school"*. (68). Enthusiasm was perceived as overall well-being that extended to different areas of life. It was also associated with experiencing one's work as valuable and meaningful.

The teachers considered students and good interaction with them as the most important source of enthusiasm. The teachers were particularly inspired by their students' experiences of learning and success, which in turn meant success in their



own work. The enthusiasm, activeness and motivation of the students were also considered to increase the teacher's own enthusiasm. *"Teaching is nice, and I notice that my enthusiasm has partly spread to students. I have also received direct feedback about it."* (46)

Positive interaction and atmosphere in the work community was associated with good interaction with both supervisors and colleagues. Enthusiasm was strengthened by finding like-minded, enthusiastic colleagues in the work community, or when one's ideas for development received support and encouragement from the work community. Sometimes, inspiring interaction and collaboration relationships were found through various networks, projects, or working life partnerships.

Autonomy, and the challenging nature, variability and versatility of work emerged as central resources associated with the content and nature of work, which made it *"challenging to get rusty in this job"* (10). New work tasks, changing work descriptions, and digitalization were also inspiring and seen as creating opportunities. The opportunity to learn or participate in further training, develop skills and utilize this in their work, for example, in curriculum planning work, was also seen as increasing enthusiasm. Enthusiastic teachers also had energy for studying outside of work.

Teachers perceived that experiences of success also increased enthusiasm, as did positive feedback on their work from students, colleagues and supervisors. *"All feedback and encouragement increase trust in your expertise and inspires to carry on"*. (52). An important aspect of enthusiasm was also the experience of being valued in one's own work community. Personal resources, good personal health, and fitness were mentioned as factors that promoted enthusiasm.

The teachers also described factors that weakened enthusiasm. By scarcity of resources the teachers referred to the reduced contact lessons and larger student groups resulting from cuts in VET funding. As a result, teachers felt a sense of inadequacy when they could not give students as much support and guidance as they needed. *"My enthusiasm is weakened by – lack to time to use for teaching. Huge cutting of contact teaching. To learn a vocation, you need time for practicing and repetition"*. (82). The teachers also mentioned overall time pressure and lack of time as reducing enthusiasm, as well as the increasing amount of external administrative work.

Interaction and work community atmosphere problems also weakened enthusiasm. Negativity, pessimism and complaining, as well as lack of appreciation and positive feedback emerged as factors that reduced enthusiasm. A lack of opportunities for discussion was also mentioned.

Educational changes and savings cuts made teachers experience general doubt and uncertainty about the future of VET and the continuity of their work. Continuous changes were perceived as bringing disruption and confusion to work, especially if the teachers felt they had been unable to influence the changes.

Organizational structures and operations were linked to, for example, bureaucracy, rigid practices, and *"everybody does it like this' guidance"* (1). Other

issues mentioned were unclear organization of work and shortcomings of the physical work environment, such as the impracticality of teaching facilities or the lack of up-to-date digital devices. In the opinion of the respondents, supervisory work or leadership that was perceived as weak, lack of support, dictation from above, or indifference also diminished enthusiasm. In addition, life management, learning challenges and lack of motivation among students frustrated the teachers.

## 5.2 Enthusiasm-enabling organization

Sub-study II looked at how teachers perceive leadership and organizations that enable enthusiasm. Answers to the research question were sought through semi-structured interviews that leaned on the positive organization's PRIDE theory (Cheung, 2014), which was also used as the frame for the interviews. The research results were also categorized according to the PRIDE theory, into five main categories: 1) positive practices, 2) relationship enhancement, 3) individual attributes, 4) (positively) deviant leadership, and 5) emotional well-being. These main and sub-categories are presented in Table 7.

*Table 7. Main and sub-categories formed in Sub-study II according to the PRIDE theory.*

ELEMENT OF PRIDE	CATEGORIES OF ENTHUSIASM
<b>P</b> OSITIVE <b>P</b> RACTICES	Practices enhancing development of work and professional growth
	Practices enhancing interaction and collaboration
	Practices enhancing efficient and quality pedagogical work
<b>R</b> ELATIONSHIP <b>E</b> NHANCEMENT	Inspiring people and shared enthusiasm
	Colloquial support
	Enabled collaboration
<b>I</b> NDIVIDUAL <b>A</b> TTRIBUTES	Personal development and opportunity to develop work
	Expertise usage and sharing
	Sense of meaning at work
	Employment of strengths
	Appreciation, trust, and autonomy
<b>P</b> OSITIVELY <b>D</b> EVIANT <b>L</b> EADERSHIP	Leading (managing) the daily work
	Leading teacher enthusiasm
	Leading strengths and potentials
	Leading emotions and work atmosphere
<b>E</b> MOTIONAL <b>W</b> ELL-BEING	Change-related emotions
	Emotional atmosphere at workplace
	Sufficiency of resources



The research results showed that *positive practices* that promote VET teachers' enthusiasm are concrete practices, structures or processes in the organization, which in turn contribute to other aspects of the PRIDE theory, such as interaction, collaboration, or employment and development of strengths. The results emphasized personal development of work and professional growth, interaction and collaboration, and practices that promote efficient and quality pedagogical work. Teachers were inspired by, for example, development work groups and projects which enabled them to work with like-minded people with similar interests. Development of work was also perceived as a channel for career advancement, new challenges and expanding one's job description. Practices that enabled interaction were team meetings, in which it was possible to develop and share things together, but the teachers also wanted informal collegial discussions. One thing that was considered challenging in terms of collaboration and interaction was that many educational institutions had training facilities at several different locations.

Practices that were considered to promote quality pedagogical activities were, for example, positive pedagogy, team learning, labour-intensive learning, and in general teachers' freedom to plan their own activities. Functional processes and rational and efficient organization of work were also seen as important, as they enabled the teacher to focus on their core task, which also enabled energy for enthusiasm and creativity.

"It'd be great, if there was more collegial, you know, like discussion places where you could talk about topical things and share information and thoughts --- [a big team meeting] quite quickly becomes, thanks to some agenda, just a briefing, so there's no time for discussion." (T1)

"[when] you know what to do and on the other hand when you know the framework of the job, then it's much easier to enter the creative area." (T1)

*Relationship enhancement* was considered the starting point of enthusiasm. According to the participants, their enthusiasm was born from and strengthened by, above all, interacting with other people, becoming enthusiastic together. Enthusiastic teachers said they actively sought interaction and networks beyond the boundaries of their own unit or organization. Collegial support, which meant positive feedback, encouragement and emotional support, was seen as an important factor of enthusiasm. At best, the work community regularly shared things that everyone encountered, for example, challenging student situations. Similarly, the teachers perceived the reluctance of others to embark on experiments and carry out new ways of teaching as weakening enthusiasm. The teachers who participated in the study had also encountered jealousy and belittlement, which had reduced their willingness to present their own ideas to the work community.

“When someone is upset or feeling down, because of a student case, for example, then it’s also great that we can share these feelings with each other and then always think about what you can do, about something in particular, then we try to kind of pull together”. (T15)

Enthusiasm-enabling organizations and leadership are also based on *individual attributes*. The teachers were inspired by mastering new things, learning new things, and developing their own work, skills and themselves. They expected work to vary and offer new challenges, which they also sought by, for example, studying alongside work. The teachers were willing to share their own skills and learn from others. At the same time, they expected to receive feedback and appreciation for their work from others, not just students and collaboration partners. They hoped to receive concrete rewards and incentives as well as trust, appreciation and autonomy. In addition, the teachers hoped that strengths and potentials would be recognized and employed more widely, and that leadership would be goal oriented.

“Well in that way exactly [the organisation could show appreciation], by doing a little more of a kind of talent review. That’s probably a strange term for a municipal organization. “What do you mean, don’t teachers stick to what they know?” kind of thinking”. (T12)

The teachers felt that *positively deviant leadership* and supervisory work was crucial for enthusiasm: “*That [leadership] is the alpha and omega of it*”. (T5). First of all, the teachers wanted smooth leadership in their daily work, which they claimed was promoted by the supervisor having first-hand experience of teaching and the field of education. They considered it important that the supervisor was present in everyday work and that the threshold of turning to their supervisor if necessary was low. They also wanted feedback, encouragement, and attention to success from their supervisor in everyday working life. The supervisor was expected to acknowledge different strengths and opportunities for individuals’ development. In addition, they considered leadership that was enabling, reformative, open-minded, and in line with the VET Reform as promoting enthusiasm. Supervisors were expected to be pioneers, courageous and encouraging as regards different experiments and innovations. A management and supervisor who inspires through their own example was also considered to be central to enthusiasm.

The participants were mainly satisfied with the activities of their immediate supervisors. Supervisors were described as emotionally intelligent, humane and approachable. The leadership of emotions and atmosphere was largely associated with the personal characteristics of the manager. The participants also had experience of supervisors who did not consider emotional and atmosphere-related issues as belonging to their job descriptions. On the other hand, supervisors’ skills in

acknowledging emotions and the atmosphere and bringing up issues for discussion when needed were also described.

“To lead so that this employee gets a chance to flourish in those areas that he or she finds motivating and strong for him or her. But then, a bad leader is one who just kind of independently decides that certain tasks should be done in a certain way, but for example, doesn’t think very much about whether they’re suitable, or if it would be possible to find someone else in our unit who can do one thing better and someone else who can do something else better”. (T5)

“Whenever needed, the supervisor intervenes. And listens. And then works a lot for something, and such a lot, that if there is...there’s always something in a big group like that, then like, takes care of it so well, in a way, that, if someone needs to be asked about something that has caused, for example, a bad atmosphere for some time, not necessarily connected to work, people have things in their personal lives don’t they, so, so....Is able to deal with it so well that no one is, like, blamed – that someone’s worried about it. So, quite magnificently can handle these kinds of things without blaming anybody, but by discussing. – And is able to support you like, in a way, in your work in the future too and... I’ve had these kinds of experiences in this group too. Really magnificent”. (T4)

The participants described change a great deal and its impacts on enthusiasm, *emotional wellbeing* and atmosphere. Changes had taken place in organizational structures and, for example, in the educational institution’s facilities. The work communities of the participants had experienced the VET Reform and its related changes as stressful, even though they had already learned to accept continuous change. Continuous cooperation negotiations were seen to have a direct impact on the work atmosphere, and to have permanently changed the atmosphere of the organizations.

“To have such huge national cuts in education and having all news telling how many VETs are unemployed and which organisation will lay off people next, it certainly creates a certain basic atmosphere”. (T10)

The atmosphere was thought to play such a big role because it also affected students. Diminishing resources and increasing workload were believed to affect both employee enthusiasm and well-being.

### 5.3 Enthusiasm-enabling leadership

Sub-study III examined the teachers' immediate supervisors' perceptions of leadership that enables enthusiasm. Four categories were formed on the basis of the study's results, which describe how the immediate supervisors in VET promoted teachers' enthusiasm in their work, and what challenges the supervisors described in leading enthusiasm. These categories were (1) nurturing encouraging atmosphere, (2) cherishing good relationships, (3) providing encouraging feedback, and (4) trusting in teachers' development of work and expertise. These are shown in Figure 1.

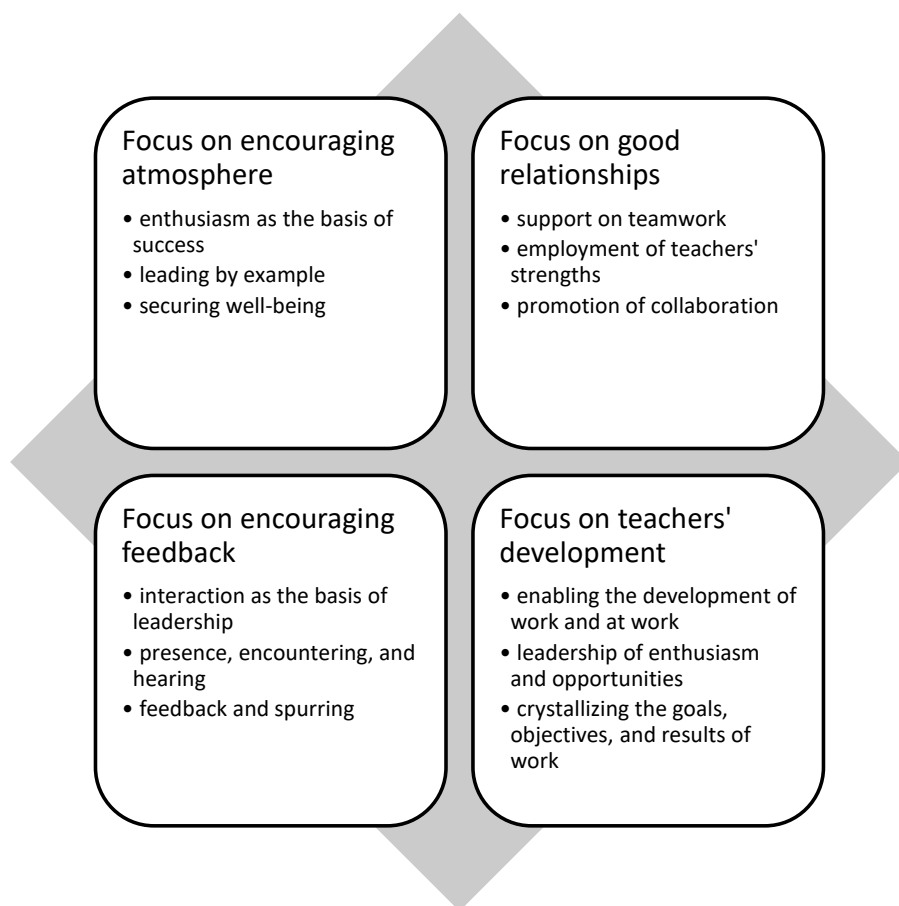


Figure 1. Immediate supervisors' perceptions of leadership that enables enthusiasm.

The supervisors described leadership that promoted teacher enthusiasm as *nurturing encouraging atmosphere* on three levels, as illustrated in Figure 1. All the supervisors considered enthusiasm an essential prerequisite for teaching work,

which helps teachers cope especially in challenging situations. Enthusiasm was seen as a key component of a good atmosphere and a driving force for the development of work and expertise. It was considered a prerequisite for positive change in VET, as it produced new ideas, insights and experimenting. Enthusiasm was also considered important for students' motivation.

The supervisors felt it was challenging to influence atmosphere. The presence of even one strong-minded personality was seen as affecting the atmosphere, which may have become negative over the years. One's own example was felt to have the most significant impact on creating a positive atmosphere. In practice, this meant being present, positive actions, showing compassion and trust, and caring for people. So-called silent signals were also considered important. The supervisors considered smooth running of everyday work and a reasonable workload to also be an important factor for atmosphere.

According to the supervisors, enthusiasm can be inspired by leadership that is based on values and virtues such as humaneness, humility, consistency, equality, and situational awareness. The supervisors stressed the importance of an atmosphere in which people's different life situations and related load factors are understood. They were also aware of the challenges to enthusiasm and well-being arising from change.

“[As a supervisor] I am encouraging, see the good in people, trust in the potential of people.” (IS10)

“Somehow, when you listen to those signals of where you might have challenges. Of course, you should not listen to all squeaky wheels. But when you encounter several similar then you have to find out what it is all about for real. And otherwise, if they are left unsolved there, they will nest and start to lead from shadows.” (IS7)

The supervisors described leadership that promotes enthusiasm through *cherishing good relationships* on three levels, as shown in Figure 3. The team's functioning was seen as the basis of everything and provided enough energy for developing things. A supervisor was considered able to influence the group's activities and relationships through, for example, the organization of work and division of labour, being present and interaction.

The supervisors claimed to understand diversity well and to invest effort in understanding and employing strengths in the group. According to them, the VET Reform had enabled the emergence of new strengths, and the idea of strengths had expanded. The supervisors had observed that by employing people's different strengths it was also possible to influence prejudices and resistance to change. By harnessing people's individual strengths – “the right person in the right place” – was thought to generate enthusiasm and performance.

The supervisors recognized positive energizers in their teams (see Cameron, 2012) who inspired other people and accomplished a great deal. On the other hand, according to the supervisors, these people also encountered resistance. The supervisors themselves claimed to try to take a positive and encouraging approach to enthusiasm, even though they also considered it challenging if there were people in the group who were constantly negative. If enthusiasm was concentrated among only a few people, it was considered to place a strain on both the group and the inspirers. Collaboration was seen to improve well-being and commitment at work when it was possible to share things and obtain support from others. For their part, supervisors could contribute to the sense of community through organizing, for example, shared coffee breaks, or planning times or planning days. A good practice had proven to be a joint review of things at the end of the working day

“We have had group changes over the years, personnel make-up has changed, and I myself sort of enjoy these when I see then how my own intuition sort of carried us or worked, that if, say, personal chemistries worked better at that point and it was worth steering them to perhaps work together or that it’s like doing some sort of jigsaw puzzle, as a supervisor, which pieces belong together, and then that they themselves find that this thing works well here or...” (IS2)

“Unfortunately, we have this resistance movement - Well, we have one person who has maintained enthusiasm but really the rest of the group would like to stick to the old. So, I do not know where this person finds the energy and still copes and tries to take things forward.” (IS3)

The supervisors also described leadership that promotes enthusiasm by *providing encouraging feedback* on three levels, as shown in Figure 1. Positive interaction was seen as the basis of leadership, through which enthusiasm can be either promoted or prevented. Most of the supervisors considered their interaction skills a strength, and described their own style as solution-oriented, dialogical, conversational and humane. The supervisors also said they aimed to give the example of positive communication. They described using humour, openness, talking about non-work-related things, being themselves, and communicating in appropriate ways for specific situations as part of interaction and communication. Dealing with different emotions was also seen as part of supervisory work. Interaction, being interested in and listening to people were seen as the primary means to make things work. Interaction was perceived as enabling familiarization with both everyday work and employees, their affairs and their strengths. When interaction was good and confidential, it was considered easier to initiate discussion on difficult issues and to provide corrective feedback. The importance of dealing with subordinates and being present was seen as particularly important during times of change, when the

importance of other communication also increased. The supervisors also had regular meetings and consultations with their personnel. Various electronic communication devices had been taken into use when employees were in different locations.

“I just pondered with my colleague that what it actually is, good leadership I mean or something else. Is it actually just good interaction?” (IS13)

“Yes, I also get those happy calls and sometimes those angry calls that we have to deal with.” (IS8)

“Nothing happens if you don’t get on with the staff in a good way. I see it as being a prerequisite for everything, otherwise it glitches and badly so, so I see that maybe the first thing and then other things start from there.- Getting on with others, knowing how each person is doing, what they do, what their everyday lives are in other ways and how they are in the other areas of their lives and stuff like that I consider the most important.” (IS14)

The supervisors agreed on the importance of positive feedback for enthusiasm. In their opinion, positive feedback was easier to give than negative feedback. They reported giving feedback in diverse ways: in everyday encounters, in writing and in person. The supervisors recognized the different needs of people for obtaining feedback. They believed that the teachers felt they received too little feedback and felt they should remember to give feedback more often. In times of change and as demands grow, feelings of inadequacy also increase, and the importance of positive feedback grows.

Leadership that promotes enthusiasm through *trusting in teachers’ development of work and expertise* had three levels, as shown in Figure 1. The supervisors considered it important that teachers had the opportunity to develop their own work and their own expertise as well as to expand their tasks. An individual’s development and self-realization were seen as promoting both organizational goals and bringing more enthusiasm to work. The attitudes to teachers’ own development goals were positive, and many opportunities were offered to promote these, such as support for training, projects, development work or working life periods. The supervisors believed that the VET Reform itself had expanded the opportunities for teacher development and self-realization. It was considered the role of the supervisor to see and point out these opportunities.

The supervisors described their own role as enablers of enthusiasm. In practice, this meant that the supervisor him/herself was enthusiastic and inspired and encouraged their personnel to try new things out. The supervisor also had the opportunity to advance the ideas of his staff and put them into practice, to support them in development and to provide the resources for activities.



“[Their enthusiasm can be maintained] by giving them tasks that makes it possible to execute their own things. Usually, it has been possible.” (IS7)

The development of work and expertise in a teacher's work is guided by the goal and objectives of the work itself. The supervisors mainly described goal-setting as a traditional strategy-oriented, top-down process, in which the objectives of the training provider are made the objectives of the units and teams. The supervisors described that the goals of their own team are agreed upon jointly and partly also prioritized and tailored to the team or unit. They believed that the participation of employees in setting goals and planning activities was a prerequisite for commitment and enthusiasm. It was felt that the best solutions for achieving goals were found from among the teaching and guidance staff, as they were experts in their own work. The goals were also monitored together.

The supervisors considered the quantitative objectives of teacher work foreign, even though, at the training provider level, these results had an impact on funding through the VET Reform. The goals of the teacher's work were seen more as a pedagogical and personal work development issue.

“What is the goal-setting for teachers in this development discussion. Is that this and this many students should graduate from you? No, no. Is it that you are able to give students good grades? No. So, what are the measurement of these goals? So, they are merely pedagogical things that I have pointed like you should take more of this and that and would you like to take this training and so on.” (IS6)

## **5.4 Summary of results**

The main objective of the study was to describe enthusiasm in the work of VET teachers and how the work organization and leadership enhances it. The results of the three sub-studies provided an insight into VET teachers' enthusiasm and the factors that influence it as manifested through the perceptions of teachers and immediate supervisors.

Sub-study I sought to answer the research questions: How do VET teachers describe their enthusiasm, and what factors strengthen or weaken their enthusiasm, according to their descriptions? The study showed that enthusiasm was described as the “force that keeps you going”, which manifested itself in the willingness of teachers to invest effort into their work and develop their own skills and working methods to meet the demands of VET, which was undergoing renewal. Enthusiasm also manifested as positive emotions and overall well-being at work. According to the teachers, enthusiasm was especially promoted by student work and success in it. The interaction of the work community as well as leadership and supervisory



work also rose to a significant position as both important promoting and weakening factors of enthusiasm. Sub-study II offered further insights, by asking: How does the PRIDE theory describe leadership and organization that enhances VET teachers' enthusiasm?

Sub-study II showed that it is possible to structure the elements of a positive organization that promotes enthusiasm in accordance with the PRIDE theory (Cheung, 2014; 2015). The teachers saw that enthusiasm could be promoted by a leadership and an organization that promotes the development of work and expertise, the recognition and employment of strengths and potential, and interaction and collaboration. Positive leadership plays a key role in a positive organization; through this it is possible to influence practices and work organization, and further elements of the PRIDE theory: positive relationships, employing individual strengths, and positive emotional climate and well-being.

In Sub-study II, positive leadership that enhances enthusiasm was manifested according to the perceptions of the teachers as leading everyday work, leading enthusiasm and opportunities, leading strengths and potentials, and leading the emotional climate. Sub-study III examined leadership that enables enthusiasm according to the perceptions of supervisors, by asking: How do immediate supervisors describe their means of promoting VET teachers' enthusiasm and what kind of challenges did the supervisors describe having noticing in it?

According to the perceptions of the supervisors, enthusiasm can be promoted through leadership that fosters a positive atmosphere and positive relationships and encourages teachers to develop their own work and expertise. The supervisors saw positive leadership that enhances enthusiasm as consisting of being present during interaction, the central elements of which are creating a positive atmosphere, nurturing good relationships, encouraging feedback, trust, and offering teachers opportunities to develop their work and expertise. Leading enthusiasm was considered particularly challenging when dealing with problems in interpersonal relationships and interaction within groups.

## **6 Discussion**

My study examined the manifestation of enthusiasm and the factors that strengthened and weakened it according to the perceptions of teachers (Sub-study I); teachers' perceptions of how organizational factors are related to enthusiasm that teachers experience in their work (Sub-study II); and supervisors' perceptions of leadership that enables teachers' enthusiasm (Sub-study III). In the following, I examine the collection of themes that emerged from the research questions and the three sub-studies, and through these I will also try to provide an overall view of a positive, enthusiasm-enabling organization and positive leadership in the VET context.

### **6.1 VET as a positive organization**

The central prerequisites for enthusiasm highlighted in all three sub-studies were the development of one's own work and development at work, the work community's interaction and collaboration, the employment of different strengths, and leadership and organizations that promote these. These themes that emerged in my research are specified in Table 8. It was noteworthy that the teachers' and supervisors' views on the factors that promoted enthusiasm were very similar.

Table 8. Main themes that emerged from the study

Study population (sub-study)	Developing (one's own work) and development (at work)	Interaction and collaboration	Employing strengths	Leadership
Teachers (I)	The desire to develop work and one's expertise is one way in which enthusiasm is manifested. Enthusiasm is promoted when it is possible to do this.	Enthusiasm strengthens through positive interaction and collaboration in the work community.	Enthusiasm is promoted if work offers opportunities to utilize your own skills and strengths and to obtain feedback on success. This creates a feeling of appreciation.	Enthusiasm is influenced by leadership and supervisory work. Supervisory support strengthens, but a lack of support, homogenizing or dictation weakens enthusiasm.
Teachers (II)	Enthusiasm is promoted by practices that support development of work and expertise, such as development projects. A supervisor can support enthusiasm by encouraging experimentation and innovation.	Enthusiasm is promoted by practices that support interaction and collaboration, doing things together, becoming enthusiastic together and collegial support.	Enthusiasm is promoted by utilizing one's own expertise and strengths in one's work and the by opportunity to share knowledge. A supervisor should acknowledge strengths and potentials.	Enthusiasm is promoted by leading and managing everyday work, leading enthusiasm and opportunity, leading strengths and potential, and leading emotions and atmosphere.
Supervisors (III)	Encouraging development of work and expertise is a part of leadership that promotes enthusiasm. It means creating opportunities and resources and clarifying the goals and objectives of work.	Enthusiasm is promoted by leadership that cherishes good relationships, supports group activities, and promotes collaboration and community spirit.	The enthusiasm of both individuals and groups can be led through strengths. A supervisor can promote the employment of strengths and skills in teams by building groups and sharing work.	Enthusiasm is promoted by leadership that acknowledges the atmosphere, supports positive relationships and collaboration, is based on interaction, leans on encouraging feedback, and supports professional development.

The above-mentioned themes cover the elements of the positive organization's PRIDE theory, which also includes positive atmosphere (originally *emotional wellbeing*, Cheung, 2014; 2015). This arises from positive emotions and people's mutually shared perceptions and interpretations of their work and organization (Härtel & Ashkanasy, 2010; Schneider, 2000). According to my study, teachers' enthusiasm was manifested through positive emotions at work and in the work

community (see also Kunter & Holzberger, 2014). Both my own and previous studies suggest that a positive atmosphere is both a prerequisite for enthusiasm and a form of its manifestation, and that it is partly influenced by positive leadership and a positive organization (see also Cameron et al., 2011; Mroz & Quinn, 2013).

In the following, I will further elaborate on the core themes of my research as part of enthusiasm-promoting, positive VET leadership and organizations.

### **Enthusiasm is teachership in which work and expertise are developed**

Despite the reforms in VET challenging teachers' ability to cope (Day, 2002; Hargreaves, 2005; see also OAJ, 2018), the teachers who participated in my study were very enthusiastic about their work. According to my study, VET teachers' enthusiasm, as described by the teachers themselves, was related to teaching, the subject being taught and the professional field (Keller et al., 2016). The enthusiasm described by the teachers in this study covered the various dimensions of work engagement: Enthusiasm was manifested through experiences of vigor, dedication and absorption at work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Social interaction with students and in the work community was also highlighted in the teachers' enthusiasm (Klassen et al., 2013). According to the teachers, students – student interaction and student learning – were a key source of enthusiasm, as previous studies have also shown (Kunter et al., 2011).

The enthusiasm described by the teachers who participated in my study highlighted the dimension of development of work and expertise, which brings enthusiasm close to the concept of thriving at work (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005; Stairs & Galpin, 2013). Thriving at work, that is, simultaneously experiencing learning and vitality, has been considered an alternative concept to work engagement for describing a positive work-related orientation (Meyer, 2017). In a time when working life and vocational training are marked by continuous change, the development of one's own work and development at work is of paramount importance to teachers (see also Bakker, 2017). Therefore, teachers' enthusiasm can also be seen as an enabler of continuous learning. My study shows that enthusiasm as investing effort in work and accomplishing things is linked to vocational teaching, which is both undergoing and creating renewal and is in accordance with the VET Reform, that both adapts to students' needs and is geared to networks and the world of work. As stated in previous research, a vocational teacher is also an important role model, who through their own enthusiasm can also promote students' enthusiasm and learning (Keller et al., 2016).

In my study, the importance of the development of work and expertise emerged as a component of an organization that enables enthusiasm, as well as in the views of the supervisors. Previous studies have also shown that opportunities for professional development promote work engagement (e.g. Albrecht et al., 2015; Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Harter & Blacksmith, 2013). A significant finding is that the

teachers who participated in my research were also interested in advancing their careers and expanding their work tasks (cf. e.g. Bubbs, 2005). These opportunities had been offered to them by various teams, projects and networks. Developing one's own work can be seen as *job crafting*, which can promote enthusiasm and work engagement (e.g. Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). However, the development of work also requires support, encouragement and autonomy on the part of the organization and supervisors, as my study clearly showed. Against this background, it is noteworthy that according to the Working Conditions Barometer in Education, only half of VET teachers perceive their supervisors as encouraging development (OAJ, 2018).

### **Enthusiasm strengthens through interaction and collaboration**

Enthusiasm is social and contagious in nature (Frenzel et al., 2018). My research confirmed the idea that enthusiasm is strengthened by positive interaction in the work community (Geue, 2018; Owens, Baker, Sumpter, & Cameron, 2016). The enthusiastic teachers who participated in my study stated that they actively sought to interact and collaborate with other enthusiastic, development-minded people in different networks and beyond the internal boundaries of their own organization (see also Gittell, 2012). My research also highlighted the desire for 'hot groups' based on voluntary participation, in which different people could make the most of their own skills and strengths and develop their work and expertise together with others.

Community spirit and working together are prerequisites for inspiring, productive and meaningful work (Richardson & West, 2013). Positive organizational research has found that "positive energy networks" strengthen resources, well-being, work engagement and job performance (Baker, Cross, & Wooten, 2003; Owens et al. 2016), as well as the coordination of work and through this, efficiency (relational coordination, Gittell, 2012). According to my study, it is important for enthusiasm that organizational structures and practices enable informal collaboration and interaction between people (see also Bakker, 2017; Geue, 2018; Kunnari & Ilomäki, 2016; Reeves et al., 2017).

Promoting positive relationships, collaboration and interaction is a key part of a positive organization (Cheung, 2014; 2015). A point that arose strongly in my research was that good, trusting relationships provide teachers with collegial support, which in turn is an important resource that buffers workload (see also Lam et al., 2010). The importance of work community support emerged in all my sub-studies, in the views of both the teachers and the supervisors. The supervisors who took part in my study felt that nurturing and promoting good relationships was an important part of their work (Carmeli et al., 2009), but also its most challenging aspect. It is important to note that supervisors also need courage, because sometimes, as my study showed, the functioning of the work community may require personnel changes or changes in groups (see also Mishra & Mishra, 2012).

### **Enthusiasm is promoted by employing personnel strengths and potential**

VET has traditionally been organized around fields of study and the subjects taught. Recognizing and employing teachers' individual strengths stemming from personality, interests or prior knowledge have not necessarily been seen as important (van Woerkom et al., 2016), and positively deviant performance has not been rewarded (Bloom et al., 2015; Harter & Blacksmith, 2003; Jokinen et al., 2018). Teachers' job descriptions will expand under new VET, providing an opportunity to organize work with an emphasis on personal strengths and interests (see also Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). This opportunity was also observed by the supervisors and teachers who took part in my study, who considered that a wider employment of strengths was important for promoting enthusiasm: the teachers expected the supervisor to recognize and acknowledge their strengths, and the supervisors in turn claimed to strive to enable the employment of strengths by, for example, sharing tasks. Previous research also shows that strengths are key to both work engagement and job performance (Bakker et al., 2019; van Woerkom et al., 2016; Wood et al., 2011).

My research revealed that an enthusiasm-enabling supervisor recognizes different strengths in their personnel and through these can also, when needed, guide a person to change their activities and develop. If necessary, the supervisor may be able to adjust the job content or tasks to suit the individual's strengths. Recognizing and exploiting individual strengths is also linked to leadership of teams and groups. According to my study, it is especially important for leading enthusiasm that team composition, division of labour and tasks can be planned using different skills and strengths (Mroz & Quinn, 2013; van Woerkom et al., 2016). The use of strengths also creates a feeling of appreciation, which the teachers who participated in my study called for. Mutual appreciation and trust can also create an atmosphere in which one is willing to share one's expertise (see also Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005).

### **Leadership that enhances enthusiasm is based on interaction**

Leadership can, according to the teachers, both promote and prevent enthusiasm. My study highlighted individual leadership that takes place through interaction and acknowledges the different needs of individuals in terms of leadership. Although it has been suggested that an enthusiastic employee 'creates their own resources', my research showed that even an enthusiastic teacher needs feedback on their activities and acknowledgement of success (cf. Bakker et al., 2011). Based on my study, it seems that in order for a supervisor to give personalized feedback or to make things progress in the longer term, they must understand and be familiar with the teacher's daily work. This requires not only the supervisor's interest, presence and interaction, but also skills in both teaching and the professional field. Earlier research emphasizes that the coaching role of the supervisor is highlighted when they themselves have no substantive competence in the field of study (Uusiautti, 2016).

According to my study, teachers found that leadership that takes into account well-flowing everyday work, emotions and atmosphere (cf. Cheung & Wong, 2011) promoted their enthusiasm. They also expected their supervisor to lead enthusiasm and opportunities, strengths and potential (cf. Harter & Blacksmith, 2013). According to my research, the supervisors' perceptions of leadership that enables enthusiasm were very similar to those of the teachers. In their view, leadership that enhances enthusiasm primarily concerns human work that takes place through interaction (see also Syväjärvi & Vakkala, 2012), which emphasizes being present, humaneness and human values (see also Uusiautti et al., 2012). Through interaction that is genuine and involves listening, a supervisor can gain an equally good insight into the life situations, strengths and daily work of their personnel, through which enthusiasm-enabling leadership can be realized (see also Hulpia & Devos, 2010). My study highlighted that through presence and interaction, a supervisor can understand the daily lives of their personnel and, if necessary, be there to help and support them in creating ideas and encourage them to experiment. As my research shows, being present does not mean intervening or continuous participation in a teacher's work; it means being available and helping when needed. A positive exception is a supervisor who puts people first in their work and, when needed, carries out large or small actions in everyday life. Particularly in times of change, concrete actions and putting oneself on the line maintain confidence and hope (Mishra & Mishra, 2012; Youssef & Luthans, 2013). The importance of interaction, communication and presence is emphasized during change, when information, clarification and reviewing are needed (Vieira-dos Santos & Gonçalves, 2018).

### **Positive leadership promotes a positive atmosphere**

Previous research has shown that supervisory work and leadership have a significant impact on work community atmosphere (Wijewardena et al., 2014). From this perspective, positive leadership can be seen as an important factor in promoting a positive climate. It has been found that a positive work atmosphere is created by spirals of positive interaction, positive emotions and action (Geue, 2018; Sekerka & Fredrickson, 2013). My study highlighted the importance of enthusiasm in the formation of a positive atmosphere. It also showed that atmosphere is influenced by the supervisor's own values, virtues and concept of humankind, even if they are poorly acknowledged in everyday life. Earlier research has found that a supervisor's own positivity also fosters positivity among employees (Bono & Ilies, 2006). My own research showed that by leading, a supervisor can influence the atmosphere by their own actions and example, by promoting enthusiasm – positive relationships, interaction and collaboration – and employing different strengths. It can be presumed that, in a positive atmosphere, the personnel can experience the resources and demands of their work more positively (Bakker, 2017).



The importance of atmosphere increases during times of change. A positive atmosphere marked by trust helps people face change and tolerate uncertainty (Mishra & Mishra, 2012). In my study, the greatest difference between supervisors' and teachers' perceptions was their views on the effects of the VET Reform on enthusiasm. Although the supervisors said they were aware of and concerned about their personnel's ability to cope during change, they still primarily saw the Reform as an opportunity to develop work and expertise, to employ different strengths, collaborate, and become enthusiastic. The teachers who participated in my study saw change, uncertainty, and resource cuts as major threats to enthusiasm. The fact that the supervisor interviews were conducted last in order, in the fall of 2018, when the Reform had been in full force for one semester, may explain this difference. On the other hand, it is also likely that supervisors have to have a positive attitude and believe in the opportunities brought about by change, because of their own positions. It is important to note that the highly enthusiastic teachers who participated in my study felt that change and uncertainty factors weakened their enthusiasm (see also Kunnari, 2018). Thus, it is important to give room to emotion and interaction during changes, and for leadership to acknowledge people's different experiences (see also Day, 2002; Vähäsantanen, 2015). Discussing common goals, values and basic tasks also contributes to sense of meaning (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2011; Vähäsantanen, 2015). A leader or supervisor has the opportunity as well as the responsibility to create stability, security, hope and meaningfulness in times of change (Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015).

## **6.2 Conclusions and further research topics**

The VET Reform at best creates opportunities for collaboration and wider employment of different strengths (see also Kunnari & Ilomäki, 2016). On the other hand, as my study pointed out, increasing demands and the simultaneous reduction of resources can also threaten the well-being and enthusiasm of teachers (Day, 2002; Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2011). My study showed that success in student work is essential for teachers' enthusiasm, which depends on sufficient resources and a common understanding of the meaning and goals of work (Vähäsantanen, 2015; Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2011; see also Boldrini et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important that teachers' feelings of belonging, competence and autonomy are also supported (Kunnari & Ilomäki, 2016). Positive leadership and immediate supervisors' work take on a central role, of which my study sought to form a picture.

The concept of enthusiastic leadership that emerges from my study is in line with Cameron's (2012) model of positive leadership, the elements of which are positive atmosphere, positive communication, positive relationships, and positive meaning. Instead of producing a list of leadership practices (see Meyer, 2017; Stacey,



2007), my study attempted to highlight the principles and factors that are essential to enthusiasm. It found that positive leadership is related to the management of practical issues as well as values and the self-awareness of the leader (Bush & Glover, 2014; Hannah et al., 2009). My study also shows that positive leadership is realized at the level of the concept of humankind, values and virtues (see also Avolio & Gardner 2005; Hannah et al., 2009) as well as in everyday life, as a positive and appreciative way of dealing with and leading people (see also Bass, 1985; Gardner et al., 2005). My research follows the earlier notion that a positive leader is an example, a positive role model, and an inspirer of a positive atmosphere (Hannah et al., 2009).

The picture constructed by my study of positive, enthusiasm-promoting leadership comes close to authentic leadership (Bass, 1985) and pedagogical leadership, which emphasize the leader's own concepts of humankind, knowledge and themselves as a leader (Their, 1994, 46). In addition, enthusiasm-promoting leadership, according to my study, is in line with transformational leadership, which focuses on showing direction, that is, vision, developing and supporting people, organizing, developing a communal culture and structures, and relationships (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Many traditional leadership models have been considered one-dimensional and inadequate, particularly in the context of educational institutions (Bush & Glover, 2014; Male & Palaiologou, 2015). Much attention has been paid to the different forms of distributed leadership (e.g. Jäppinen & Maunonen-Eskelinen, 2012), which also bears similarities to the enthusiasm-promoting leadership I present here. My study shows that according to the perceptions of both supervisors and teachers, participation, autonomy, collaboration, and the employment of different strengths through sharing skills and working in development teams all promotes enthusiasm (Hartley, 2010). Therefore, it is imperative that personnel collaboration and interaction are given time and opportunities in the everyday life of VET organizations (Baker & Dutton, 2007). According to my study, teachers' enthusiasm stems from collaboration and networking, but rigid structures and traditional practices can make it difficult to organize collaboration (Bakker, 2017; Kunnari & Ilomäki, 2016; see also Jäppinen, 2010). It is important to note that by investing in interaction and social atmosphere, one can also influence personnel performance and work productivity (Cameron, 2012; Geue, 2018).

My study reinforces the view that positive leadership is not a new concept or an 'ism'; it is positive leadership that appreciates and understands people (see also Syväjärvi & Perttula, 2012). The results of my study are also supported by the socio-constructivist view that leadership is interaction in changing and complex situations (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Stacey, 2007). As my study shows, positive leadership as human work and interaction does not exclude the management of everyday work and issues. It revealed that teachers value smoothly running everyday work and well-functioning processes that allow them to focus on their core task (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005). This is also related to the views of servant leadership in that the task of the leader

is to secure other conditions of work (Greenleaf, 1997). Most of the supervisors who participated in my study had the title of head of education. My study revealed that dividing working hours between managing people and routine tasks was challenging for supervisors. As positive leadership that enhances enthusiasm appeared in my research to be primarily human work taking place through interaction, it is clear that it also takes time, especially during times of change.

For reasons of efficiency, educational institutions have been combined into larger units (see also Day, 2002). My study revealed that decision-making and bureaucracy, especially in large municipal organizations, can cause slowness and rigidity, which may weaken people's enthusiasm and willingness to develop (see also Bakker, 2017; Kunnari & Ilomäki, 2016). A team-based structure can be a source of people's enthusiasm if teams are able to take advantage of each person's best strengths and combine different skills (Richardson & West, 2013). In any case, it's good to note that team-based organizations may not work just by themselves. My study shows that supervisory work does not rule out team autonomy and self-direction; it supports and creates the conditions for these. One possible topic for further research to examine could be teachers' and supervisors' experiences of different organizational structures and their effects on enthusiasm.

The VET Reform is based on collaboration, which means that interaction between people will increase. As my study showed, this also poses new challenges and skills requirements for supervisory work. Based on my study, in the future, supervisory work will emphasise skills in dealing with people and managing their strengths on the one hand, and skills in group leadership and managing the emotional climate on the other (see also Edelman & van Knippenberg, 2018). Therefore, it is important to consider where these skills could be acquired and whether vocational teacher education should play a more central or integrative role in training immediate supervisors in education.

In this study, the focus was on leadership and the organization. However, it is also worth considering the extent to which individual factors influence enthusiasm. It has been found that self-efficacy in particular (Bandura, 1977) is associated with work engagement (Youssef-Morgan & Bockorny, 2013). A person who believes in themselves and their own potential is more likely to have a more positive and enthusiastic attitude towards changes and challenges. However, it has also been found that leadership can reinforce self-efficacy through, for example positive feedback and thus also lead enthusiasm through individual factors (Gruman & Saks, 2011). Strengths in particular have been identified as a significant individual resource which, when identified and harnessed, can strengthen enthusiasm (Bakker et al., 2019; van Woerkom et al., 2016).

My study shows that enthusiasm – teachers' positive and reformative orientation towards their work – is a driving force for change in VET and should therefore be promoted and managed (Owens et al., 2016; Saks, 2017). Enthusiastic teachers can

be considered agents of change (Lam et al., 2010; Macey & Schneider, 2008) and positive energizers (Cameron, 2012). Based on my study, enthusiasm can be promoted by positive leadership and a positive organization that enables the development of one's own work and development at work; the employment of individual strengths and interaction, and collaboration in the work community. Because enthusiasm affects student motivation and performance, as well as teachers' own well-being, it should be taken into account in organizational strategy and processes at all levels (Albrecht et al., 2015; Guest, 2014; Saks, 2017). The PRIDE theory presented in this study offers a concrete structure and it can be comprehensively applied in different organizations and activities.

Positive leadership or a positive organization does entail constant enthusiasm or positivity. Nor does it mean sweeping difficult issues under the carpet. Instead, by applying positive principles, it can build, over the long run, an organization that produces enthusiasm and well-being. This also makes changes, setbacks and stress easier to deal with (Fredrickson & Dutton, 2008; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). In line with the principles of positive psychology, we need to consciously pay attention to positive things, deliberate positive actions, and understanding the importance of positive phenomena (Cameron et al., 2011). Based on positive psychology, this study also offers perspectives on well-being and its promotion in VET organizations: enthusiasm and work engagement, as well as thriving at work, represent a positive concept of well-being, which is not merely the absence of ill-being, but optimal functioning, flourishing, learning and vitality at work (Seligman, 2011; Spreitzer et al., 2005).

As a social phenomenon, it would be useful to examine the creation of enthusiasm using different research methods, such as group interviews or ethnography (Brewer & Hunter, 2006; Galletta, 2012). In addition, it would be important to look at other VET personnel groups, such as guidance counselling and support staff, whose job descriptions, including their work requirements, differ from the work of teachers. In a changing era, taking into account the socio-constructivist view and the dynamic process nature of work communities, longitudinal research could also have its own place.

Through its qualitative research approach, this study sought to provide a deeper understanding of the manifestation of VET teachers' enthusiasm and the factors that influence it. It built an understanding of what positive leadership and a positive organization in VET could mean from the perspective of leading enthusiasm, which also brings added value and further knowledge to the field of positive organizational research (see Blanch et al., 2016; Cameron, et al., 2011). In the future, it would be interesting to explore through quantitative research how the practical application of positive leadership and a positive organization or different interventions promote enthusiasm, and the impact of teachers' enthusiasm on the productivity of VET, using different indicators. Further development and application of the PRIDE

theory in, for example, quality management or well-being management, also offers many topics for further research. Practical examples and case studies of the application of the PRIDE theory provide much-needed additional information for its further utilization.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix 1 / Sub-study I, Webropol questionnaire

### Background information

#### Sex

Male

Female

#### Age

Under 20 years

20–29 years

30–39 years

40–49 years

50–59 years

Over 60 years

#### How long have you been working in the field of education?

0–3 years

4–10 years

11–20 years

21–30 years

Over 30 years

#### Type of institution you work?

Vocational institution

Vocational special education institution

Liberal adult education

#### In which field of VET you mainly work?

Humanities and education

Arts

Social sciences, business and administration

Natural sciences

Engineering, manufacturing and construction

Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary

Health and welfare

Services

Preparatory education

Common degree parts

#### Do you work as a group instructor?

Yes

No

#### Highest degree you completed

General upper secondary education

Vocational education and training (VET)

University of applied sciences education

Masters' degree

Doctorate

#### Qualification for teaching assignments

Class teacher

Subject teacher

Vocational teacher

Special needs teacher

Guidance counsellor

No qualification

#### How enthusiastic are you about your work?

At scale 1–4

1= Not at all enthusiastic

2= A bit enthusiastic

3= Quite enthusiastic

4= Very enthusiastic

#### How your enthusiasm (or lack of enthusiasm) is manifested in your work? (Open answer)

#### Which factors strengthen your enthusiasm at work?

(Open answer)

#### Which factors weaken your enthusiasm at work?

(Open answer)

## Appendix 2 / Sub-study II, Frame of interview

Background information		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub-themes</i>	<i>Examples of questions</i>
Background information	Task Field of education Education Work history	
Organization and work environment	Description of the institute  Description of the organization  Teams, or how the work is organized	
OPENING SEGMENT (Galletta, 2012)		
		What kind of organizational, managerial, and workplace factors enhance your enthusiasm?
MIDDLE SEGMENT (Galletta, 2012): THE ELEMENTS OF PRIDE (Cheung, 2014)		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub-themes</i>	<i>Examples of questions</i>
Positive practices	Methods or practices that promote enthusiasm	Describe a concrete situation in which you have noticed your enthusiasm being aroused. Do you have methods or practices that promote enthusiasm? Could you tell us more about them? How do they promote your enthusiasm?
Interaction and relationships	Interaction Collaboration Relationships at work	How is positive interaction nurtured/promoted in your work community? How would you describe interaction in your everyday life and your work community? How is interaction enabled? How do you collaborate (in your team, organization)? What is the impact of interaction and collaboration on enthusiasm? What kind of relationships do you have at work?
Employing strengths	Strengths Challenges Appreciation Sense of meaning	What strengths do you have? How are they used in the team? How could they be used more? What are the challenges in your work and how can strengths be used to respond to them? How do you feel it is shown that your work is appreciated/not appreciated?
Leadership	Leadership in general  Activities of immediate supervisor	What is the significance of leadership for your enthusiasm? How would you describe leadership in your organization in general? How would you describe the activities of your immediate supervisor? What in your supervisor's activities would help to increase your enthusiasm? How do your supervisors acknowledge positive emotions, atmosphere, strengths and positive practices?
Emotions	Emotional climate  Acknowledgement of emotions  Positive emotions at work	How would you describe your work atmosphere? What kind of emotions does it involve? How are emotions acknowledged? How would you describe situations in which you experience positive emotions at work? How do you think it would be possible to promote positive emotions in your own job?
CONCLUDING SEGMENT (Galletta, 2012)		
Other arising issues		Would you like to raise any other issue or situation related to this topic?



## Appendix 3 / Sub-study III, Frame of interview

<b>Background information</b>
Education
Work experience
Teacher education, teaching experience
Leadership training, experience as supervisor
<b>Questions about enthusiasm</b>
How important do you consider enthusiasm to be a) in your work? b) among your subordinates?
In your view, what is the significance of enthusiasm in teachers' work? How is it manifested? What is its effect?
How can you, as a leader, promote enthusiasm? Could you give us a practical example of a situation in which you felt you successfully created enthusiasm? Which things do you think can prevent enthusiasm? Could you give us a practical example of a situation in which an employee's enthusiasm diminished?
Can enthusiasm be irritating? Why? When? Can enthusiasm be excessive?
<b>Leading enthusiasm</b>
<b>Your perception of leadership</b> What do you think is most important in supervisory work? How would you describe your own leadership style? What are your own strengths as a supervisor?
<b>In what way do you think emotional climate is important?</b> What factors affect it? How can you promote a positive atmosphere? How do you ensure that emotional support is available to your team? How do you give feedback? How do you tackle conflicts? How have you dealt with atmosphere 'poisoners'? How do you ensure the smooth running of everyday work?
<b>Changes</b> Have you undergone organizational changes or co-operation negotiations? What effect have they had? What do you think is the most important in your role as a supervisor in these situations? What do you think about the effects of the Reform?
<b>Collaboration, relationships</b> What do you think is the importance of relationships in a teacher's work? How do you promote positive relationships and collaboration? How have you solved relationship problems? Do you recognize positively energizing people in your team who energize others? How have you acknowledged these people? What about the best performers? (are they the same?) How do you acknowledge them? How do you create energy in your team?
<b>Strengths and development</b> What do you think about employing strengths at work? How do you acknowledge the different strengths of teachers? How are strengths employed in your team? How do you utilize and share expertise in your team? How do you lead/promote people's ability to develop themselves and their work? What do you think about teachers' opportunities to progress/expand their tasks? How do you acknowledge, or could you promote this?

<p><b>Interaction</b></p> <p>What do you think is the significance of interaction for enthusiasm?</p> <p>How would you describe communication in your team?</p> <p>In what way have you strived for positive communication?</p> <p>What opportunities have you offered your personnel for receiving feedback?</p> <p>How do you acknowledge successes in communication?</p> <p>How do you provide corrective feedback?</p>
<p><b>Goals, meaningfulness</b></p> <p>What do you think generates meaningfulness in work?</p> <p>How can you promote a sense of meaning?</p> <p>How and what goals do you set for your team?</p> <p>How do you ensure that people can experience the goals of work as meaningful?</p> <p>How do you set goals that are measurable?</p> <p>How do you recognize and reward the achievement of goals?</p> <p>How do you ensure the compatibility of human values and work values?</p> <p>How do you highlight the long-term effects/benefits of work?</p>
<p><b>What else would you like to say about the topic?</b></p>

## Appendix 4 / Sub-study I, Questionnaire invitation

(A short version of the cover letter was on, for example, Twitter; the longer form was a cover letter passed on through professional teacher associations)

Dear VET teacher!

In my dissertation I am studying enthusiasm among VET teachers.

[I am studying at the University of Oulu, Master's Degree Programme in Education. This is my second degree alongside my work as a VET teacher and developer. My supervisors are Professor Mirka Hintsanen and Professor Kirsi Pyhältö.

Last spring, I completed proseminar work on the same topic at the University of Jyväskylä Open University. My goal is to continue with this topic in my doctoral dissertation.

My target group is teachers working in vocational education, including adult education and liberal adult education, but not those working at universities of applied sciences. As a background question, please choose the level of education in which you work.]

I would be grateful if you could answer a short questionnaire and thereby help make vocational training more inspiring and a better place in which to work and study.

Your responses will be anonymous and can be given via the link below

*LINK*

*Thank you in advance.*

*Have a good day at work!*

Kind regards

Sanna Wenström

## Appendix 5 / Sub-study II, Interview invitation

Dear recipient and colleague!

I am approaching you regarding an important issue. I am working on my doctoral dissertation at the University of Lapland, which examines enthusiasm experienced by VET teachers in their work, its reasons, consequences and significance. The supervisors of my dissertation are Professor Satu Uusiautti and Professor Kaarina Määttä.

I am writing my dissertation study as international articles. The first article is already awaiting publication. It examines the manifestation of teachers' enthusiasm. You may have already answered my first questionnaire and for this I would like to kindly thank you.

Next, I would like to study which organizational factors promote and prevent VET teachers' enthusiasm in their work.

I am requesting an interview with you. Your interview can be conducted as you wish – either face-to-face or via Skype, at a time that suits you best. The interview will take an hour at most. It will be a themed interview, in which you are free to share your perceptions and experiences. All experiences are important and there are no right or wrong answers. I will treat the data as strictly confidential and will not publish any information that enables an interviewee to be identified.

Will you accept my interview invitation? I need information on your experiences and insights, as well as your expertise, to be able to comprehensively describe how the important enthusiasm a teacher experiences at work is strengthened or prevented. This topic has not been previously studied in the Finnish education field. Through my research, I wish to promote the well-being of teachers, the development of work communities, and the support of VET teachers' enthusiasm.

I would be happy to give you more information on the study.

I thank you in advance for your time and reply. Could you please send your positive reply as soon as possible, by 15.3. at the latest? I will then contact you to arrange the date and time of the interview. You can also suggest a date and method in your response.

Kind regards, and in anticipation of your reply.

Sanna Wenström

## **Appendix 6 / Sub-study III, Interview invitation**

Dear VET immediate supervisor!

I am approaching you regarding an important issue. I am working on my doctoral dissertation at the University of Lapland, which examines enthusiasm experienced by VET teachers in their work, its reasons, consequences and significance. The supervisors of my dissertation are Professor Satu Uusiautti and Professor Kaarina Määttä.

I am writing my dissertation study as international articles, the first two of which are already awaiting publication. Sub-study III highlights the views of immediate supervisors in education regarding leadership that enables enthusiasm. I am requesting an interview with you for this study.

Your interview can be conducted as you wish – either face-to-face or via Skype, at a time that suits you best. The interview will take half an hour to an hour. It will be a themed interview, in which you are free to share your perceptions and experiences. All experiences are important and there are no right or wrong answers. I will treat the data as strictly confidential and will not publish any information that enables an interviewee to be identified.

Will you accept my interview invitation? Your experience, insight, and expertise as a supervisor are important to enable me to describe the different aspects of enabling teacher enthusiasm. This topic has not been studied before in the field of Finnish education, and research on VET is also sparse. Through my research, I wish to promote the well-being of teachers, the development of work communities, and the support of VET teachers' enthusiasm.

I would be happy to give you more information on the study.

I thank you in advance for your time and reply. Could you please send your positive reply as soon as possible, by 9.9.2018 at the latest? I hope you can suggest suitable times for the interview.

Kind regards, and in anticipation of your reply.

Sanna Wenström

## Appendix 7 / Sub-study I, Participants' demographical information

Amount of participants	103	100 %
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	31	30 %
Female	72	70%
<b>Age</b>		
Under 20-y.	0	0 %
20 - 29-y.	0	0 %
30 - 39-y.	18	17 %
40 - 49-y.	32	31 %
50 - 59-y.	34	33 %
Over 60-y.	19	18 %
<b>Type of institution</b>		
Vocational school	78	76 %
Vocational special education institute	23	22 %
Liberal adult education	2	2 %
<b>Field of education</b>		
Humanities and education	3	3 %
Arts	2	2 %
Social sciences, business and administration	5	5 %
Natural sciences	3	3 %
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	30	29 %
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	1	1 %
Health and welfare	19	18 %
Services	14	14 %
Preparatory education	16	16 %
Common degree parts	10	10 %
<b>Working as a group instructor</b>		
Yes	60	58 %
No	43	42 %
<b>Highest degree of education</b>		
General upper secondary education	0	0 %
Vocational education and Training (VET)	6	6 %
University of applied sciences education	42	41 %
Masters' degree	54	52 %
Doctorate	1	1 %
<b>Qualification for teaching assignments</b>		
Class teacher	5	5 %
Subject teacher	21	20 %
Vocational teacher	70	68 %
Special need teacher	44	43 %
Guidance counsellor	16	16 %
No qualification	1	1 %